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EDITORIAL

When It's Summer in North China....

Mid-summer is past, but not yet the great heat. Summer visitors to the Chinese capital can of course look to the traditional places — east to the seaside resort of Beidaihe or Shanhaiguan at the eastern end of the Great Wall, north to the imperial summer resort of Chengde (all in Hebei) — for relief from the heat. However, in this issue we offer some little-known alternatives, only recently open to tourism and easy of access from Beijing, in southern and central Hebei.

For cooling, water-based relaxation, some lazy days boating and swimming at Lake Baiyangdian might be just the thing. Yesanpo, for its part, offers deep, cool ravines and deserted segments of the Great Wall tucked in along the Taihang Mountains, which mark the western rim of the vast North China Plain.

These areas were part of the territory of two states of the Warring States Period as much as four hundred years B.C. and abound in relics and historical associations. Handan, one-time capital of Zhao, is now a modern industrial city, yet the link with the past is retained through the ceramics workshops which turn out articles based on Song-dynasty designs — replicas of the famous Cizhou ware.

Just southwest of Handan, you can also see relics dating from the Northern Qi, one of the Northern Dynasties, of the sixth century. Like their better-known predecessors, the Northern Wei, they carved cave-temples out of the rock, complete with much fine statuary.

Coming back to the present, our judges have had an unenviable task choosing from so many thousands of excellent entries for our Grand Photo Contest, but they have managed it somehow! In this issue we are proud to present the winners and their photos. These and a large number of other selected entries will feature in the exhibition we are holding this October in Hong Kong's Museum of Chinese Historical Relics. If you love good photography, this exhibition is not to be missed. Thank you again, all those of you who entered, and our hearty congratulations to the prize-winners.

This page: Monster's mask carved on the Zhaozhou Bridge, Zhaoxian (by Peng Zhenge)



Qingdao Angling

Zhalong — A Bird-Watcher's Paradise

A Bowl of Tea Amid Melodies

Central / Southern Hebei

'Erotic' Carvings of Mount Qingcheng

Baling Bridge

From Lhasa to Sichuan ... On Foot!

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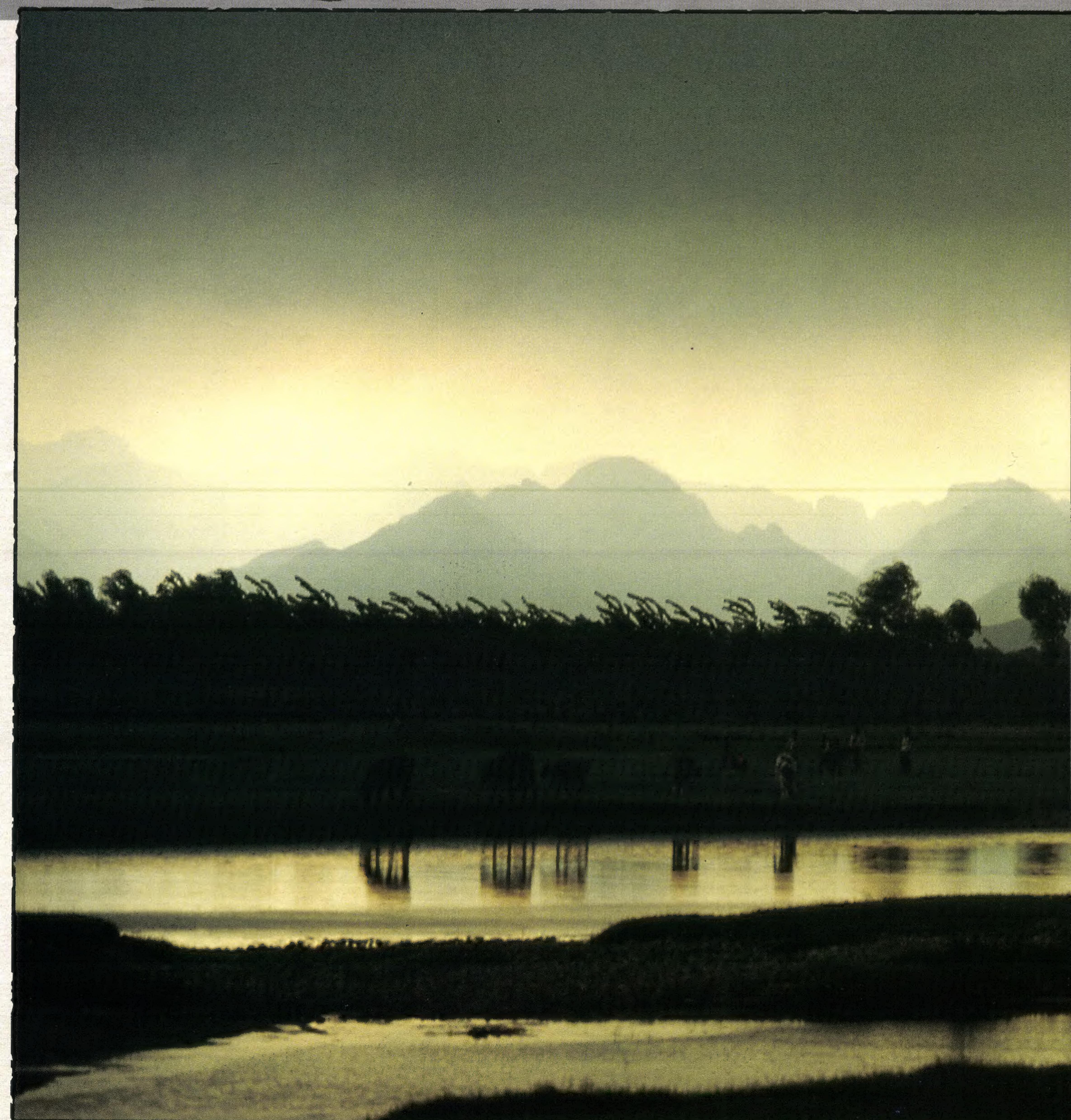
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CENTRAL/SOUTHERN HEBEI

Nostalgia for the Pa



st: In the Land of Yan and Zhao

PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY PENG ZHENGE



The cool, windswept River Yishui (2) gives its name to the Yishui inkstones produced in Yixian County (1)







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According to the *Yu Gong* (China's earliest geographical work, believed by many contemporary scholars to have been written during the Warring States Period, in other words, 475-221 B.C.), China's territory was divided up into nine *zhou* (regions) after the legendary Yu the Great harnessed the rivers. Present-day Hebei Province then came partly under Jizhou, one of these nine regions. At the time of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (722-221 B.C.), northern Hebei was on the southwest periphery of the State of Yan, while southern Hebei formed the heartland of the State of Zhao. Thus Hebei is sometimes referred to as the 'land of Yan and Zhao.'

Located east of the Taihang Mountains in the western part of the North China Plain, Hebei is set between three of China's ancient capitals — Beijing, Xi'an in Shaanxi and Kaifeng in Henan. This geographical position

means that it has frequently borne the brunt of military operations throughout Chinese history. Even the tribes from outside the Great Wall had to pass through here to reach the Central Plains.

The Chinese have a saying: 'Yan and Zhao have since antiquity been full of men of great passion and heroic mettle.' And certainly, Hebei boasts many sites of historic interest and is a veritable goldmine of anecdotes concerning the past.

Since many of the places and people we will be talking about in this article are connected with the Warring States Period, let's start with a brief background explanation. The Warring States Period was just that — a series of wars punctuated by uneasy alliances between one or other of the seven kingdoms or states: Han, Wei, Qi, Qin, Chu, Yan and Zhao. This was a time of sweeping social and political changes and of great innovations. But it all came to an end when the ruler of Qin succeeded in gaining overall control and founded the Qin dynasty (221-207 B.C.) as Shihuang, China's 'first emperor'.

My journey through these ancient lands took me to Yixian County in central Hebei,

Reminders of Jing Ke abound in Yixian: a Liao-dynasty pagoda named after him (3); a depiction of his attempt to assassinate Shihuang (2, illustrated by Guo Fugui). The Yishui's swampy upper reaches in Laiyuan County (4) and the Yuan-dynasty bell at Geyuan Monastery (1). The compound of Baoding's Lianhua Pond makes the ideal venue for morning exercises (5).

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1



2

just outside the limits of Greater Beijing, close to Xiadu, one-time capital of Yan; then south to Handan, former capital of Zhao. I found many of Hebei's frank, straightforward people only too happy to recount tales connected with their homeland and its past glories and tragedies.

Cool Is the Yishui....

*Cool, cool is the River Yishui
Made cool by the wind
that soughs and sighs.
Once this bold gallant goes out of sight
Never, never will he return.*
This is said to have been the song sung

repeatedly by Jing Ke and his bosom friend Gao Jianli before the former set off on his desperate mission for Prince Dan of Yan.

This too needs explanation. The State of Qin under the future Shihuang had annexed Han and Zhao and was threatening to do the same to Yan. Prince Dan therefore employed Jing Ke (?-227 B.C.) to cut short the Qin ruler's ambitions. Jing Ke, descended from a noble family of the State of Qi, was born in the State of Wei but had sought refuge in Yan after the annexation of his home state.

The plan was as follows. A former general of Qin, Fan Yuqi, had defected to Yan. In order to permit Jing Ke to get close enough to

the Qin ruler to kill him, this general offered his own head to be delivered as a sign of friendship. His offer accepted by Prince Dan, he committed suicide on the spot. Jing Ke went off to the Qin capital bearing Fan Yuqi's head and a rolled-up map of Dukang (a Yan territory supposedly to be ceded to Qin) in which he hid a dagger. Unhappily, during his audience with the Qin ruler, the map came unrolled at the wrong moment revealing the dagger and, although he tried to stab the king, he missed his mark. He was put to death on the spot.

His friend, Gao Jianli, changed his name to escape arrest for his part in the plot after Qin seized overall power. Even when his identity was discovered, Shihuang spared him because of his musical talents. However, Gao had not given up the conspirators' original intention and he too hid a weapon while entertaining the emperor with music and made an attempt against his life – again in vain. He was executed.

The River Yishui, widely reputed to be the setting for Jing Ke's song, flows through Hebei's Yixian County.

From Baoding, we sped northwest across the North China Plain. After half an hour or so, the Taihang Mountains appeared in the distance. My companion pointed at one row of peaks and told me that these were known as Langya (Wolf's Teeth) Mountains. The name seemed most apt since the peaks seem to spring high above the plain, snapping at the sky.

The weather had been fine all the way up to this point. But when we reached the Yishui, dark clouds rolled overhead followed by a sandstorm that made the sky as black as night, although you could see the other side of the Taihang Mountains still bathed in sunlight.

Jing Ke became known far and wide during his stay in Xiadu. According to the *Shi Ji (Records of the Historian)*, completed somewhere between 104 and 91 B.C., after Jing reached Xiadu he 'drank wine every day in the market with a dog butcher and Gao Jianli. When they grew flushed and mellow, Gao Jianli would strike up his *zhu* (a lute-like instrument) while Jing Ke joined him in singing in the streets to amuse themselves. Then the two would start sobbing, face to face, as if no-one else were present.' Jing's uninhibited personality and refusal to bow to social conventions eventually caught the attention of Prince Dan of Yan, with the results noted above.

Yet, although Jing Ke was not a 'native son', a mountain about three kilometres west of the county seat, a village at the foot of the mountain and a pagoda there have all been named after him. The pagoda is a simple affair encircled by an ochre-yellow wall and set in a lush green vegetable garden. It is weather-beaten and gives the impression of

being very old. I was told it dates to the Liao dynasty (916-1125) and has been rebuilt through the centuries, keeping the original layout.

On the way from the Jing Ke Pagoda to the old capital Xiadu, yellow mud city walls about five metres high can be seen here and there. Xiadu is situated between the upper and middle reaches of the Yishui some ten kilometres southeast of Yixian itself. The first capital of the State of Yan was Ji – present-day Beijing – but, in order to cope with the southern states of that time, a new capital, Xiadu (Lower Capital), was built here while the existing capital was renamed Shangdu (Upper Capital).

Today, all that remains of Xiadu is a mass of delapidated walls sprawling through the fields and villages. But you can still see raised platforms about one metre high, said to be the foundations of the palaces and other buildings of yore. Archaeologists have identified the sites of a mint, pottery and armoury.

Battlefields of the Past

The head of the Yishui is in Laiyuan County. We followed the river upstream to the northwest. Laiyuan, where the Taihang, Hengshan and Yanshan Ranges meet, is said to be the source of the Juma and Laishui as well as the Yishui. During our 100-kilometre journey, we saw cattle and sheep grazing on the pastures, with the steep peaks of the Taihang Mountains rising up behind.

One history book describes Laiyuan as 'clutching at the throat of Qin and Jin and serving as a screen for Yan and Zhao. Despite its limited area, Laiyuan is actually an important approach to the [Yan] capital.' And, given its strategic importance, the whole county is littered with ancient battlefields. Liu Bang, founder of the powerful Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), is said to have accepted his adviser's proposal to build a line of defence along the banks of the Juma and to have massed his troops there before proceeding with his eventual country-wide conquests.

The Great Wall in this part of the country is fairly well preserved. The best section must be the Wulonggou (Black Dragon Ditch) with over forty watch-towers. There are six major passes along the Great Wall at Laiyuan, the best-known being the Futuyu Pass, from where Li Zicheng, leader of the peasant insurgent army of the late Ming dynasty, started his military campaigns. The Great Wall at Chajianling further southwest was also the site of fierce battles.

Quyang is famous for its stone-carving, even today (1), while the Vairocana Temple in Shijiazhuang's suburbs boasts fine murals (2, by Gu Shengtian). A close-up reveals structural details of Zhengding's Guhua Pagoda, dating from the Tang dynasty (3).





South of Laiyuan there is a large tract of meadows submerged under clear water so that, at first glance, you think this is a swamp. But when I scooped up some water and drank it, I found it as sweet and refreshing as spring water. I was told it does not freeze over during the winter. Laiyuan is known with justice as the 'city of springs'.

In the county town itself one can find the Geyuan Monastery dating from the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), with murals inside and a bell made in the same period. Twenty kilometres away is Mount Baishi, over two thousand metres above sea-level, the summit of the northern branch of the Taihang Mountains. Early one morning we were driven up to the summit by car to watch the sunrise.

Another attraction in the county is the plateau known as the Dianzi about fifty kilometres north of the county seat. This gentle grassy slope high on the mountain is said to have been pastureland for cavalry horses in the past. Tiny chrysanthemums of various colours now carpet the meadows where flocks of sheep drift under their shepherds' watchful eyes like white clouds across the sky.

Baoding, the 'South Gate'

We returned to Baoding. This ancient city adjoining Lake Baiyangdian has long been considered the southern gateway to Beijing.

According to the historical records, it was first built in the Sui dynasty in the year 600. During the Song dynasty (960-1279), large quantities of troops were garrisoned here to guard the frontier region against the invasions of the Khitans, nomadic tribesmen from the north. Later, when the Mongol armies of the Yuan dynasty conquered the troops of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), they had the entire population of Baoding massacred. The city was left empty for about fifteen years.

However, despite this dreadful fate, it does have some places of interest to offer the present-day visitor. The Lianhua (Lotus



Flower) Pond, for example, is more than seven hundred years old. Set in the heart of the city, it was originally known as Xuexiang (Snow Fragrant) Garden, and was built by Marshal Zhang Rou of the Yuan dynasty. Later, during the Qing dynasty, emperors such as Kangxi, Qianlong and Jiaqing used it as a temporary residence when they travelled south. It has also served as a college. The pond, surrounded by pavilions and bridges, is overgrown with tier upon tier of lotus pads. Regrettably, when I was there, the lotuses were no longer in flower.

Continuing south, we passed tracts of land upon which medicinal plants grew, among them yellow chrysanthemums, red cocks-combs, purple *Strobilanthes cusia*.... We were approaching Anguo, where almost every household grows medicinal herbs — some 230 species all told. Hence the old saying in the locality: 'Only with herbs grown in Anguo

can a prescription be made up; a drug will not smell fragrant unless it is from Qizhou.'

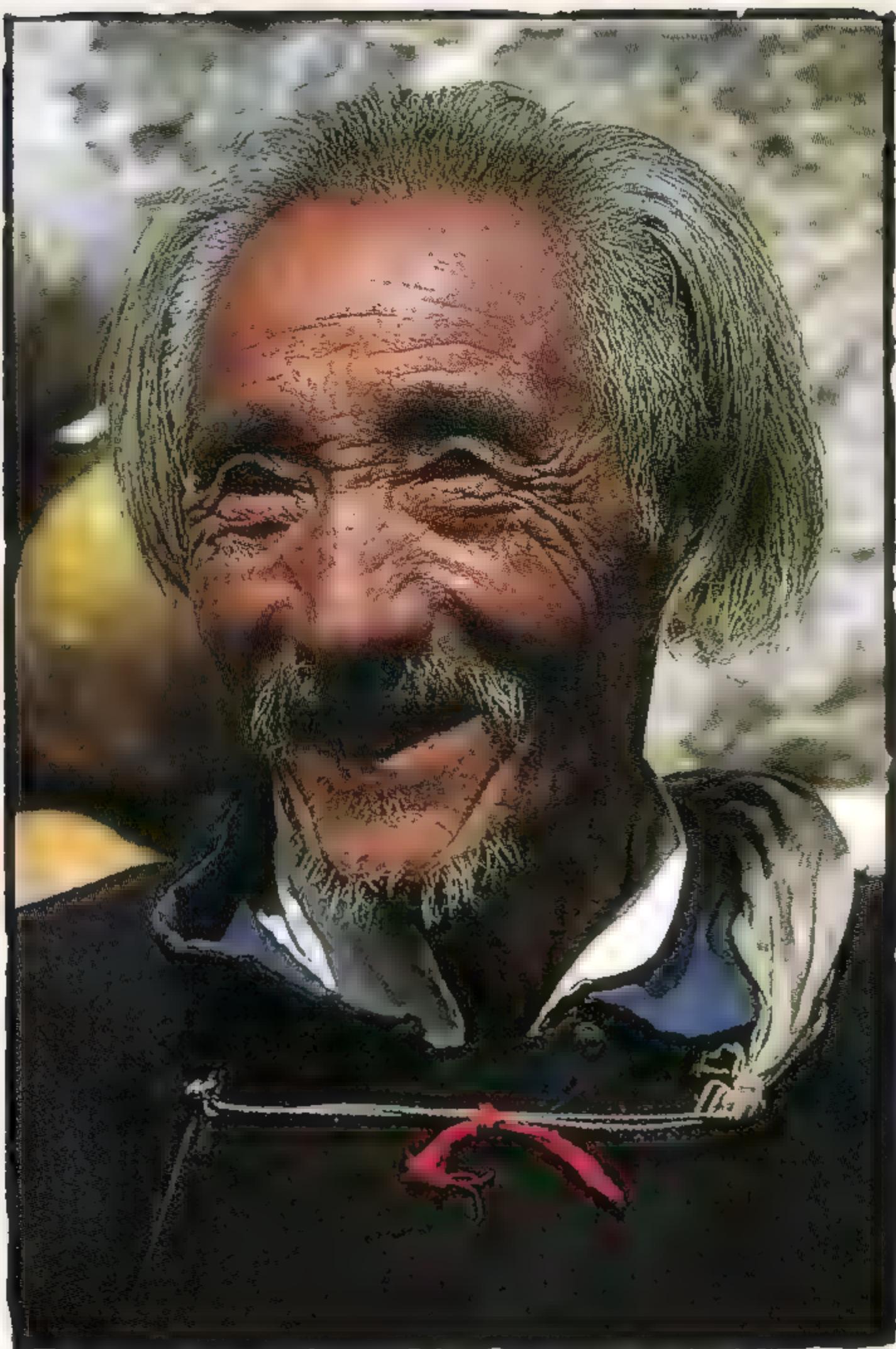
Qizhou is the old name for Anguo. This town already had the reputation of being the 'No. One Medicine Fair in the Country' by the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The present marketplace covers an area of about fifteen hectares and there is a market three times a week. Anguo has a temple dedicated to the 'King of Medicine', Pei Tong. Pei was an officer of the early Eastern Han (25-220) who for some time was stationed in Anguo as the commander of the garrison. A learned scholar, he was also specialized in pharmacology and saved the lives of many wounded soldiers. He was posthumously awarded the title 'King of Medicine' in the Northern Song dynasty, less than a century after his death.

Northern Qi Carvings

My next stop was Quyang County on the western rim of the North China Plain. This was in the territory of Zhao in the Warring States Period, when Quyang was a strategic passage between Dingzhou to the east, Mount Wutai in Shanxi to the west and Laiyuan to the north. As such, it was of the utmost importance and there was much fighting for control of it.

One of the most interesting monuments in this county is the Beiyue (North Mountain) Temple. Built in the Northern and Southern Dynasties (386-589), it contains much of interest, particularly stone inscriptions and carvings dating from the Northern Qi

A farmer from Baxian County, northeast of Baoding, constructs intricate models from sorghum stalks (1, by Kang Diansfeng). Masonry marvels: the Song-dynasty Hongji Bridge (2, by Liu Qiyun), the original Sui stonework on the famous Zhaozhou Bridge (3), and a bridge in front of Zhengding's Longxing Monastery (5). Tiger-head shoes are common wear for small children in Hebei (4, by Li Shuquan).



(550-577). The North Mountain is none other than Mount Hengshan in Shanxi, one of the five sacred mountains of ancient China. Emperors – from the Han to the Qing – used to come to make sacrificial offerings at this temple, which represented the spirit of the mountain to the northwest.

To this day Quyang continues to be noted for its carvings. The village of Yangping is aptly described as the 'home of stone carving'. The din of chisel on stone never stops and the courtyard of every dwelling is littered with stone images – lions, Buddhas, fairies, even modern nudes....

Until the early years of this century Shijiazhuang was just a village under the jurisdiction of Huolu County, with an area of no more than half a square kilometre. As Hebei's

provincial capital it now boasts a population of more than half a million and is a railway hub as well as an important industrial centre. The city itself offers little of touristic interest (except perhaps the memorial of Norman Bethune (1890-1939), the Canadian doctor who devoted his life to China), but near Zhengding ten kilometres to the northeast is Longxing Monastery with its giant bronze Avalokitesvara (see CHINA TOURISM no. 120), one of the 'Four Treasures of Hebei'.

About forty kilometres southeast of Shijiazhuang is Zhaoxian, known as Zhaozhou in the old days. In the Sui dynasty, some 1,400 years ago, it was a communications hub in northern China, linking with the capital Luoyang in the south and Zhuojun (Beijing's name at that time) in the north. It was thus known as the 'land leading in all four directions.' Given this significance, it is understandable that all the dynasties made every effort to open up the region with roads and bridges.

Today only two stone bridges are left in Zhaoxian County, but they are in excellent condition after renovation. One of them is the world-famous Zhaozhou (or Anji) Bridge, another of the 'Four Treasures'. Built in the Sui dynasty across the River Xiaohe, it is a single-arched stone bridge thirty-eight metres long, seven metres high and with the arch formed by twenty-eight parallel voussoirs, said to be the oldest of its type in the world.

Close examination of the bridge shows that the stone slabs on the surface were added at a much later date, but that those on its base are original. The original carved parapet, also of Sui-dynasty stone, has been removed for safekeeping and can now be seen in the nearby Hall of Cultural Relics.

The second bridge, not far away, is smaller and dates from the Jin dynasty. It is known as the Yongtong Bridge.

Capital of Zhao

Handan was mentioned as early as 546 B.C. in the *Chunqiu Zuozhuan* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) by Zuo Qiuming. According to Zhang Yan, who annotated the *Han Shu* (*History of the Han Dynasty*), which was compiled during the Eastern Han, *han* was the name of a mountain, while *dan* meant 'end'. So Handan means 'where Mount Hanshan ends'. From 386 B.C. onwards this was the capital of the State of Zhao which flourished for 158 years under eight rulers.

In Handan it is impossible for a Chinese visitor not to think of the famous proverb 'Handan xuebu' ('learning the gait of Handan people') and go to see Xuebu Bridge. Built in the Ming dynasty, this bridge takes its name from the proverb, which comes from the chapter 'Qiushui' of a work by Zhuangzi (396-286 B.C.), a great Taoist philosopher. The hero of the tale is a young man from Shouling in the State of Yan who comes to Handan and is fascinated by the graceful walk of the local people. He sedulously attempts to emulate them, only to end up not only failing to acquire this skill but also forgetting his own natural gait! He eventually has to crawl back to his own country on his hands and knees, making himself a figure of ridicule. Although he was comparing the rustic naivety of Shouling with the urban elegance of Handan, Zhuangzi's purpose was to underline that he who seeks only superficial success and neglects the deeper truth finishes by losing all the benefits of his search.

The history of Handan is extremely dramatic. In 228 B.C. troops commanded by Wang Jian, a Qin general, stormed Handan and captured King Qian of Zhao. His heir, Prince Jia, fled to Dai (now Yuxian County) and proclaimed himself King of Dai, but his kingdom too was annexed by Qin in 222 B.C. The nobles of Zhao nevertheless refused to give up. In 209 B.C., one of them seized Handan and named himself King of Zhao. The following year Qin troops captured Handan and forced its inhabitants to move to Henei (on the north bank of the Huanghe – the Yellow River – in what is now southern Hebei). Handan was put to the torch and its walls were razed to the ground.





3

Zhao did not perish without putting up a tough fight. One of the most monumental struggles against Qin was the Battle of Changping (near present-day Gaoping County in Shanxi) in 260 B.C. The Zhao troops were commanded by Lian Po, a general noted for his military prowess. When the Qin troops failed to overpower their enemy, they started spreading untrue rumours about Lian Po. The Zhao ruler believed them and relieved Lian from active duty, replacing him with the arm-chair strategist Zhao Kuo. The result was that his troops were shortly afterwards ambushed and cut into two. While laying siege to the Zhao army, the Qin troops drafted all men aged fifteen and over from the Henei area to intercept Zhao reinforcements and cut off their supply lines to Changping. The Zhao



4

The red knot attached to this Shexian County resident's jacket is there because it is his son's wedding day (1). Carvings on the Xuebu Bridge in Handan bring to mind a famous proverb (2), a painting the total destruction of the Zhao capital by Qin in 210 B.C. (3, illustrated by Guo Fugui). The site of the ancient city walls (4).



1

troops were thus holed up without provisions for forty-six days. Several times they tried to break out, but to no avail. After the Zhao commander was killed in a shower of arrows, as many as 400,000 soldiers surrendered. The Qin army is said to have had all of them buried alive except for 240 people, mainly children or invalids, throwing the State of Zhao into indescribable horror and sorrow.

Its capital was located approximately four kilometres southwest of the present-day county town of Handan. I arrived there at

dusk, finding the spacious, quiet area overgrown with weeds. The spot where I stood, Beijiang (Northern General) Terrace, has a mud wall running across it.

I continued to Huichexiang (Lane Where the Carriage Turns Back), where the roadway is now buried six metres below ground-level. This is well-known as a result of the story of the personal feud between Lian Po and Lin Xiangru. These two were the Zhao king's right-hand men, Lian Po — as we have seen — in the military field, Lin Xiangru in civil

matters. However, Lian Po was the lower in rank, as Lin Xiangru was made Chief Minister. This rankled with the distinguished general and he set himself to insult and humiliate Lin whenever he met him in public. Lin did everything he could to avoid such a confrontation, making detours when Lian Po refused to give way in the street and even absenting himself from court on pretext of illness. One day, when Lin saw Lian's carriage coming from the opposite direction on a narrow street, he immediately told his own coachman to turn into a side lane and stay there until Lian's carriage had driven by. Hence the lane's name. The two were eventually reconciled and became the best of friends.

Congtai, located in the northeastern corner of Handan, is said to have been built by King Wuling (reign dates 325–299 B.C.). This was the royal household's garden and troop-reviewing area. The original layout is still detectable.

To the west of Congtai stands a small temple called the Seven Sages Shrine. It contains statues of seven Zhao officials who rendered outstanding service to the state:

Huichexiang, the lane where Lin Xiangru turned aside to avoid General Lian Po (1), here shown begging Lin's pardon (2). The royal orphan of Zhao is saved (3, illustrated by Guo Fugui). The renovated Congtai (4).









2

Lian Po, Lin Xiangru, Zhao She, Li Mu, Cheng Ying, Gongsun Chujiu and Han Jue. Their deeds are recorded in the *Tales of Various States of the Eastern Zhou*, a classical novel based on history books.

Cheng Ying, Gongsun Chujiu and Han Jue did everything they could to preserve the life of the only surviving infant of the Zhao family (this also inspired an episode in the Yuan-dynasty drama *Orphan of the Zhao Family*). Cheng Ying took his own son and gave him to Gongsun Chujiu, who took him to hide in the mountains, pretending that this was the heir of the Zhao. Cheng Ying then denounced them as planned, with the result that Gongsun and Cheng's son were executed while the real Zhao child remained safe in the protection of General Han Jue. Cheng then took the royal orphan, Zhao Wu, and brought him up in the mountains of Yu. When the boy was old enough, Cheng told him: 'Gongsun Chujiu died tragically in order to save your life during the disastrous Xiaogong incident. I have lived until this day for the express purpose of bringing up you, the sole issue of the Zhao family. Now that you have grown up and have restored the Zhao family to its rightful position, it is high time that I went to meet Gongsun Chujiu and others in the afterworld to inform them that I too have done my duty.' Thereupon he committed suicide. Grief-stricken, Zhao Wu went around in sackcloth and ashes for three years. He also decreed that the State of Zhao was to make offerings to Cheng Ying every spring and autumn.

This story epitomizes the spirit of the people of Yan and Zhao who were prepared to sacrifice everything, even their lives and the lives of their children, for the sake of what they perceived to be right and just. □

Translated by Ren Jiazen

This ancient 'beamless' hall in Handan has only recently been discovered (1). Lake Jingniang in Wu'an, northwest of Handan, is said to have been admired by the first Song emperor (2, by Liu Qiyun). Women in Shexian County preparing yarn for weaving (3, by Wang Yunliang); their houses are decorated with particular care (4, by Yang Zhijian).



3



4

CENTRAL/SOUTHERN HEBEI

Lake Baiyangdian - The Waters Ha



We've Returned

PHOTOS START ON THE NEXT PAGE





1

Previous page:

On the lake, open pools (1) alternate with reedbeds cut through by narrow channels (2, by Cheng Weidong)

More and more visitors are tasting the delights of the lake, such as the oddly shaped gorgon fruit (1) and relaxing boat rides (3). Simple accommodation at a campsite (2).



If you had come here before 1988', my driver said, 'you would have found nothing but a dry lake bed.' We were approaching Lake Baiyangdian (literally White Ocean Pool), the largest freshwater lake on the North China Plain, with an area of 366 square kilometres. But, between 1984 and 1988, the lake was dry owing to an enormous accumulation of silt resulting from damage done to the plant cover in the Taihang Mountains to the northwest.

As we drove across Baiyangdian Bridge, I could see the waters rippling in the golden glow of sunset. The nine-metre-deep lake has certainly recovered its scenic beauty since the great flood of 1988 poured down off the mountains following several successive days of heavy rain.

Eighty-five percent of the lake lies in Anxin County, east of Baoding in southern Hebei Province. After getting something to eat in the county town, I hurried to the lakeside to hire a rowing boat complete with oarsman. We set off to Yuanyangdian (Mandarin Duck Pool) to give me my first look at the lake.

The silence out on the lake was total except for the gentle splashing sounds made by the oars. The night was moonless, the water as black as ink. Whenever we heard the tell-tale sounds of another boat coming in our direction, the boatman would yell out at the top of his voice to prevent any possibility of a collision.

Early the next morning, I found the lake enveloped in thick fog which rather dampened my enthusiasm for sightseeing.

'We have a saying here that nine out of ten foggy mornings turn out fine,' a local acquaintance consoled me. 'Don't worry, it will probably be a lovely day!' And, sure enough, the sun soon made its appearance. I immediately hired another rowing boat to explore the lake.

Lake Baiyangdian is unusual in that it is overgrown with reeds which separate it into many pools of different sizes as well as creating zigzagging channels between them.





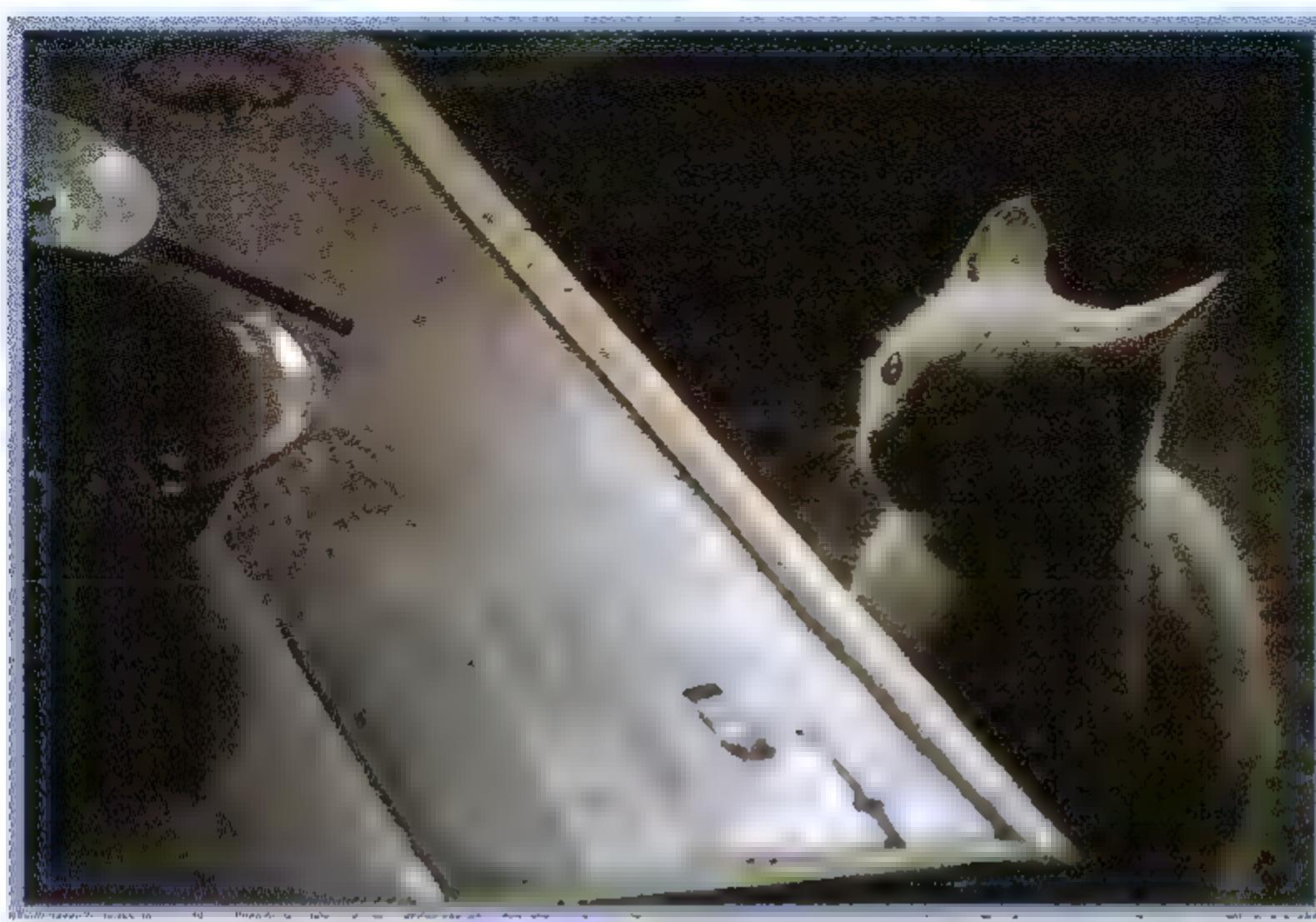


2

Man and cormorants return from a day's fishing (1). Everybody is happy the waters have returned (2 and 3)! Even chickens are at home on the lake (5), while local families love cats (4).



3



4



5

You feel as though you are threading some sort of maze on water. The reeds grow to an average height of two to three metres, giving plenty of cover if – like me – you want to change into a swimsuit.

I was told that there are nine species of reeds on Lake Baiyangdian, five of which are suitable as the raw materials for weaving mats. The history of this craft can be traced back thousands of years in this area. In 1981 archaeologists excavated fragments of reed mats three thousand years old from a site in Rongcheng County, fifteen kilometres north of the lake.

We cut through the reeds for more than two hours, now ducking into the water channels opening up the reedbeds, now passing close to a village or gliding across an open body of water.

Some fishermen were fishing with a big, cone-shaped net hung from a four-metre-high wooden frame by the lakeside. I watched one man haul it in twice — empty. Perhaps the fish have not yet managed to find their way back to the lake after the years of drought.

The local people have many ingenious ways of fishing which are mainly inherited from their forefathers. One of the methods used involves the *boxuan*, a sort of fish-trap consisting of a labyrinth of reed mats. When fish swim into this, they are led further and further in by the way the mats twist and turn until they are trapped. Passing one village, I noticed a boat laden with small woven reed traps. My boatman told me they were specifically for catching shrimps.

After two or three hours on the lake, we reached Laowangdian (Scooping Up the Emperor) Pool. Lake Baiyangdian consists of more than 143 pools, ninety-nine of which cover an area of over 6.5 hectares each. This pool is one of the bigger ones.

Its name comes from an amusing anecdote, one of many told about Emperor Qianlong (reign dates 1736–1795) of the Qing dynasty. Whenever he was not too busy with affairs of state, so the story goes, the emperor would either go to Chengde, his summer resort in northeastern Hebei, or come here to hunt at Baiyangdian. On one occasion the imperial boat, which was anchored on a large pool, was hit by an unexpected squall. The emperor was swept off his feet and blown overboard, but a passing fisherman scooped him up to safety, hence the name!

In the twilight the water of the pool was a marvellous dark-blue. The surrounding reeds and the fishing boats dotting the lake were tinged red by the setting sun. There was no wind. The pool was as calm and smooth as a mirror, and the water plants on the bottom were motionless, just swaying slightly with the current as my boat passed over them.

The spell was broken as a woman plunged into the water noisily from a boat laden with bundles of grass. Following her example, other villagers on their way home jumped in for a cooling, cleansing swim. One of the boats carried a clutch of beautiful girls. They had no oars, but were using spades to propel their boat. Laughing and shouting, the lads on nearby boats vied with one another to display their diving and swimming skills, hoping to attract the girls' attention.

That night I stayed in the village of Quantou where I was told Emperor Qianlong had had a residence constructed for his use when he visited the lake.

The following day I went to explore what, according to the map, was the site of the former palace. It is now a small market. Only some large stones by the roadside and others at the foot of the houses betrayed evidence of the imperial residence which used to stand here.

Suddenly I noticed a coffin at the other end of the village. Children dressed in mourning garb were playing beside it. I went to make enquiries and found out that their grandfather had just died. The funeral ceremony was to be held during the next few days.

Hebei people attach even greater importance to funerals than to weddings. Though they weep bitterly for the loss of their dear ones, the funeral ceremony is all noise and excitement, with much drumming and beating of gongs, lion dances, stilt-walking, opera performances, as well as religious rituals. Men and women, young and old, turn out to watch as if it were a festival.

The old man's funeral lasted for three days. It followed an orderly programme. First paper figurines and horses were burned, followed by a procession from the village to the lakeside where a mourning shed was erected. Then came the offering of sacrifices and kowtowing before the deceased....

Only on the third day was the coffin taken for burial. The family mourners waited in the mourning shed while the drums and gongs started up again and villagers gathered to watch. The funeral procession made its way right through the village to the eastern



1

Family mourners lament as the coffin is borne across the lake by barge (2) and portered the final stretch to the cemetery (3). But many villagers exhibit an almost festive mood (1 and 4) (4 by Wang Miao).



shore of the lake where two barges waited. The coffin was loaded on board and the mourners followed, after which a small tug drew the barges out on to the lake to a final barrage of drums, gongs and firecrackers. The mourners knelt around the coffin as the deceased made his last trip over the familiar waters.

After several kilometres the boats nosed their way into some reeds to reach a channel which finally brought them to the reed-covered area which is the village cemetery.

A grave had been dug ready to receive the coffin; water was already seeping back at the bottom. The coffin was lowered into the grave and covered with earth. No tombstone was erected, but I was assured that each family knows where its own graves are from their shape and location. More paper figurines were burned and the rites were over.

I followed the mourners back on the boats. There were few people fishing at this time but several villagers, who were swimming around nude, waved to us to give them a race. I found myself thinking: Without the lake's waters, how had the villagers lived?

G

Translated by Anne Yan



Cave-Temples of the Northern Qi

Southwest of Handan in southern Hebei Province lies a mountain called Gushan (Drum). This is the location of the Xiangtangshan Grottoes, the oldest of which date to the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577), one of the Northern Dynasties, resulting from the break-up of the more powerful Northern Wei (386–528). By the time of the Yuan (1271–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, sixteen caves had been chiselled out of the mountainside along with upwards of 4,300 carvings and statues big and small. These are the largest Northern Qi cave-temples extant. Their name comes from the fact that the caves pick up an echo from the footsteps of people walking around inside – Xiangtangshan literally means 'resonant echo mountain'.

Built for a Visiting Emperor

We left Handan and drove southwest, reaching the foot of Mount Gushan in less than one hour and thirty minutes. Looking up, I caught sight of a long red wall sprawling across the mountainside. This was the outer wall of the Northern Xiangtangshan Grotto.

Apparently, it was Emperor Wenxuan of the Northern Qi who, after a number of surveys, decided to build himself a temporary summer residence on an important line of communications. The emperor is said to have stayed here whenever he wished to escape the heat of his capital at Ye (southwest of present-day Linzhang). Since he was a fervent Buddhist, he also needed a place to worship. All the buildings he had erected have long





A distant view of the grottoes on Mount Gushan (2). In the afternoon, Dafo Cave is flooded with light (1); the halo of fire around Buddha's head is intricate in the extreme (3). The main lotus throne is supported by guardian deities with a noble air (4).



since disappeared. The only evidence of the past is provided by nine grottoes or cave-temples in three groups — northern, central and southern — each containing one cave on a larger scale.

A winding narrow path paved with stone slabs zigzagged up the hill to bring us to the front of the northern part of the complex.

We went first to Dafo (Giant Buddha) Cave, over eight metres



high and about twelve metres wide and deep — the largest of all the grottoes at this site. In the centre, a pillar carved on three sides with niches containing Buddha images goes right up to the roof. The cave as a whole contains over 150 Buddhas of all sizes. The most eye-catching is the statue of Sakyamuni which faces the cave mouth and is set on a rectangular base or throne decorated with two tiers of lotus

petals. Over four metres high, the statue has smooth folds in its robes and a facial expression which suggests the great humility and generosity of Buddha. Behind it is a meticulously carved halo, the sacred aura of Buddha shedding its rays in all directions.

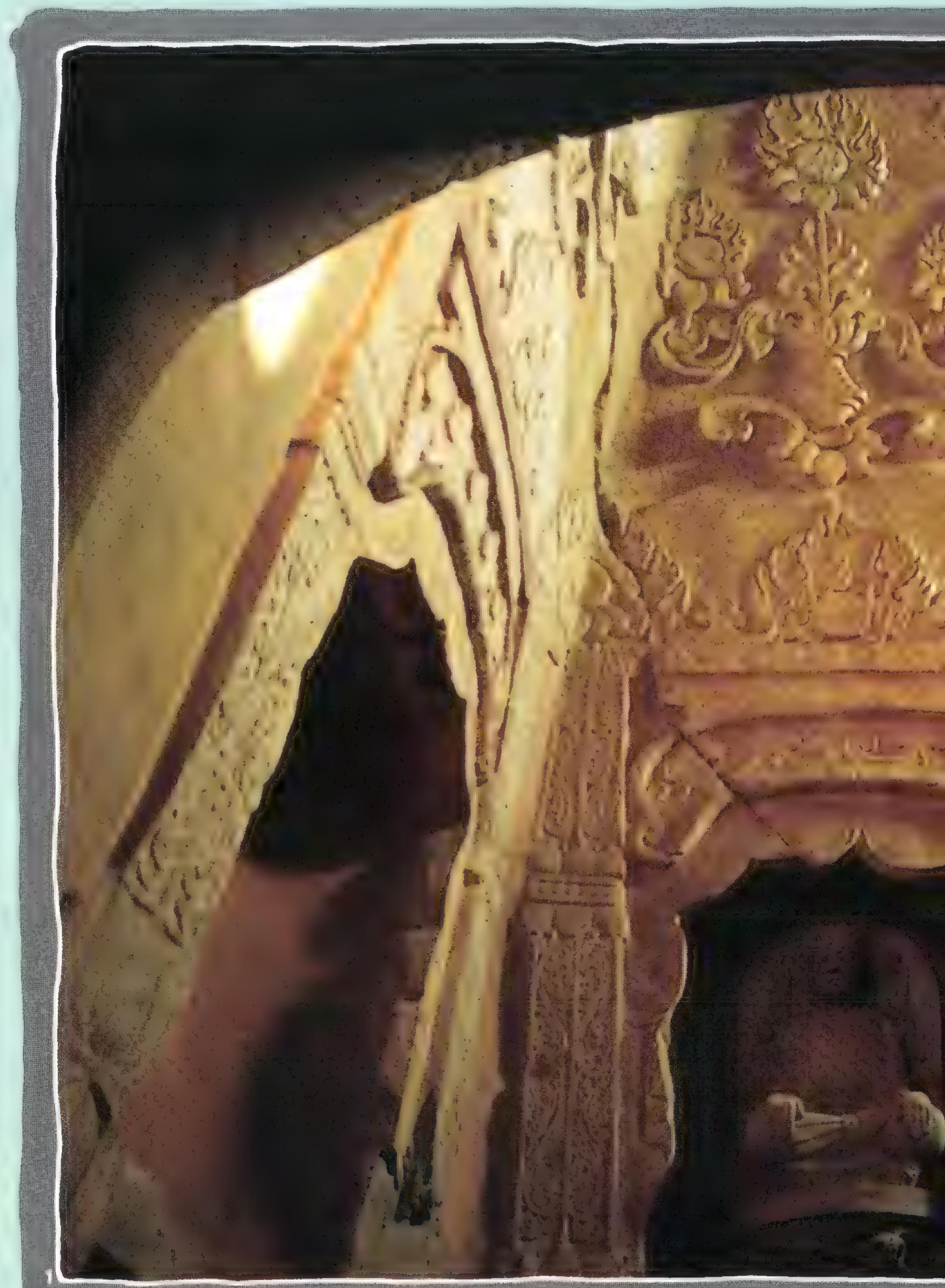
High on the cave walls there are three apertures designed to provide light for the interior. However, they also add mystery to the atmosphere in a very appealing manner. In the afternoon, the sunlight shines in through both the entrance and the apertures, illuminating the main Buddha and emphasizing the solemnity and sanctity of the cave-temple.

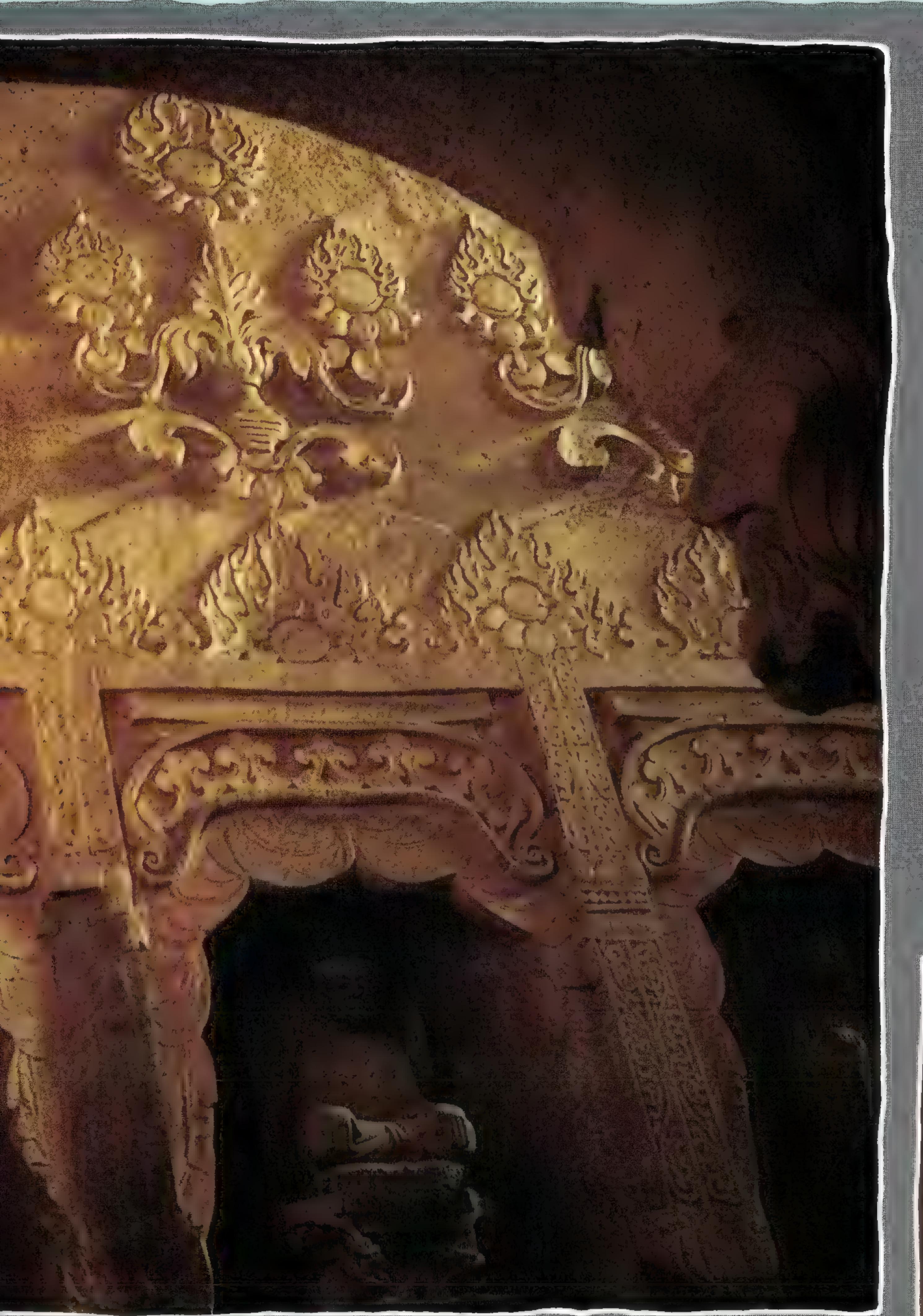
The base of the main Buddha statue is 'supported' by more than a dozen tiny guardian deities. Whereas, in cave-temples elsewhere in China, such figures are generally represented as powerful and muscular, these have the appearance of court officials, refined and noble. Fortunately, they are not free-standing, so they have escaped the all too common fate of having their heads removed by robbers.

The walls of this cave are punctuated by sixteen giant stupa-like niches, each framed with a carved curtain and canopy to reinforce the perspective and suggest depth. These details are executed in smooth strokes suggesting a realistic texture; you get the impression they would feel like a creased piece of silk fabric to the touch. Under these niches are much smaller ones containing odd-looking beings, half-man, half-beast. The cave also contains flying apsaras. When you look up at the ceiling of the entrance archway, there you see them — gracefully hovering in the clouds, their long robes and ribbons trailing as though rippling in the breeze so that the cave seems filled with dynamic motion.

Next door is the Kejing (Carved Sutras) Cave, so called because of the sutras or Buddhist texts inscribed both inside and outside. The inscriptions, I was assured, represent the texts of no less than four sutras.

I sat down to rest for a while under a stone wall at the south end of the Northern Xiangtangshan Grotto, and was surprised to note a deep handprint on the wall and two small triangular pits on the ground. These are said to provide the basis for a legend. Emperor Wenxuan of the Northern Qi recruited thousands of artisans from all over the country to assist in the creation of the grottoes. Among them was the master carpenter Lu Ban. Day and night they toiled, chiselling the rocks and carving Buddha after Buddha. Lu Ban's devoted wife toiled equally, climbing up every day to take him his meals. Her incessant travels up and down the mountain, day in, day out, eventually left this handprint and the impression of her tiny feet on the stone slab below. This of course is just a local story.





Patterns combining flame and plant motifs, perhaps of Persian inspiration, adorn the cave walls (1). Images are vividly executed: a being with the head of a makara, displaying crocodile teeth and elephant's ears, associated with water and fertility (2); Manjusri (the Bodhisattva of Wisdom) on his lion, impressive despite his missing head (3).

Apart from any other consideration, Lu Ban — who is said to have invented carpentry and many tools and implements, including the saw and the millstone — is thought to have lived in the Warring States Period (475–221 B.C.).

Buddhas in Their Thousands

The Southern Xiangtangshan Grotto is fifteen kilometres away. It is built into a hill about three or four hundred metres high, a bare cliff of slate-grey granite on which there is not the slightest hint of greenery or of living plants. Seven caves on two levels survive here, five on the upper level, two on the bottom. Altogether they contain an astonishing 3,500 Buddhist images, all dating from the Northern Qi.

Some of the caves on the upper level had been sealed up by mud and sand for several centuries and have only recently been discovered, re-excavated and cleaned. Restoration is still in progress. Despite the pleasure of knowing that these treasures from an ancient culture have come to light, it is sad and disturbing to see the heads of statues lying around on the ground in these caves. Even disembodied like this, however, their serenely smiling faces and half-closed eyes are reminiscent of the style of the Northern Wei, so important in the history of Chinese art.

The Huayan Cave on the lower level is



about five metres high and 6.5 metres wide and deep. This is the biggest of the Southern Xiangtangshan Grotto caves. Its name derives from the text of the *Buddha-avatamsaka-mahavaipulya-sutra* (the Huayan or Adornment of Buddha Sutra) incised on its walls.

Bas-reliefs inside the cave, on its south wall and around the central stupa-pillar, depict scenes of Sukhavati (the Western Paradise or Pure Land) and of Sakyamuni preaching, and illustrate Jataka stories (stories about incidents from the life of the historical Buddha). This cave is smaller than the Dafo Cave at the Northern Xiangtangshan Grotto, but it holds more Buddhist images — 1,228 all told.

The next place I visited was the Qianfo (Thousand Buddha) Cave, which is quite different from the others. Not very large in area, it is square, and has a thousand Buddhas around its four walls as well as in the various niches. The main niche features Sakyamuni sitting cross-legged on his lotus throne, with elongated ears and eyes half-closed. His solemn expression, on closer inspection, reveals a subtle smile lurking around the corners of the mouth. In the niche to the right, smiling Amitabha sits on a throne symbolizing Mount Sumeru, the holy mountain of Buddhism; his dangling feet rest lightly on lotus flowers protruding from the mouth of a strange humanoid — a rather grotesque sight.

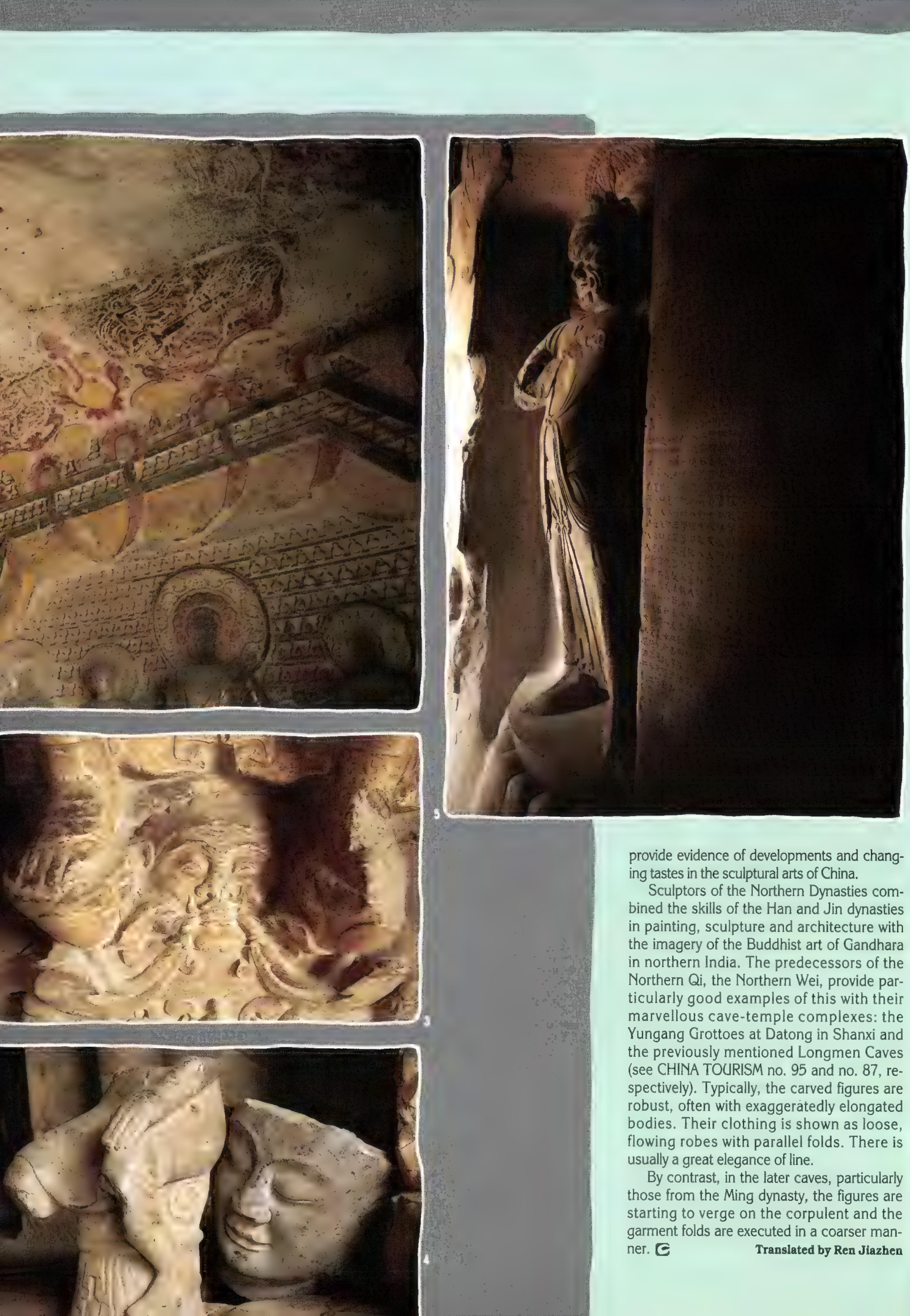
Overhead, in the middle of the cave roof, a bas-relief lotus in full bloom is surrounded by flying apsaras, some of them musicians. It is interesting to compare this with similar designs from the Northern Wei in the Longmen Caves at Luoyang in Henan. The lotus is an essential element in Buddhism. These plants have been under cultivation in China for over three thousand years and have many practical uses. But, with the advent of Buddhism, people also started to regard them according to Buddha's sayings. The lotus thus became a symbol of purity, all the greater because its roots are embedded in stinking mud. Buddhists refer to the land where Amitabha (the Buddha of Infinite Light) lives as the Western Paradise or Pure Land, but it is also known as the Land of the Lotus. It has become the tradition in Buddhist art to portray the Buddha on his lotus throne, in other words, on a base with patterns of lotus petals carved around it, often in multiple tiers. In many monasteries in China, apart from the major manifestations of Buddha, Avalokitesvara (the Bodhisattva of Mercy or Compassion) and the eighteen arhats are shown on lotus thrones. As to the apsaras on the cave roof here, they stand for the human yearning for the Pure Land, or so I was told.

Besides the carvings and statues from the Northern Qi, the Xiangtangshan Grottoes also contain works from later dynasties. They thus



The stern guardian at Kejing Cave (5). Sadly, many of the statues at these sites have been badly damaged (4). At the Southern Xiangtangshan Grottoes — here seen from outside (2) — apsaras flit around the central lotus in Qianfo Cave (1), while Amitabha has an ingenious footrest (3).





provide evidence of developments and changing tastes in the sculptural arts of China.

Sculptors of the Northern Dynasties combined the skills of the Han and Jin dynasties in painting, sculpture and architecture with the imagery of the Buddhist art of Gandhara in northern India. The predecessors of the Northern Qi, the Northern Wei, provide particularly good examples of this with their marvellous cave-temple complexes: the Yungang Grottoes at Datong in Shanxi and the previously mentioned Longmen Caves (see CHINA TOURISM no. 95 and no. 87, respectively). Typically, the carved figures are robust, often with exaggeratedly elongated bodies. Their clothing is shown as loose, flowing robes with parallel folds. There is usually a great elegance of line.

By contrast, in the later caves, particularly those from the Ming dynasty, the figures are starting to verge on the corpulent and the garment folds are executed in a coarser manner. 

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

CENTRAL/SOUTHERN HEBEI

Three Days at Yesanpo

The
meandering
River Juma
and the
mountains of
Yesanpo,
viewed from
Lotus Peak





Wedged between the Yanshan Mountains and the Taihang Mountains, Yesanpo is a picturesque area in the northwestern part of Laishui County in Hebei Province. It is only three hours by train from Beijing's Yongdingmen railway station ... three hours from the busy capital to what seems a true wilderness region, only sparsely populated.

The small railway stop here was formerly called Shangzhuang but, as Yesanpo has grown in popularity, the station has bowed to demand and copied the name. It is, after all, the main point of access to Yesanpo.

It is only five hundred metres from the station to a holiday village containing two types of dwellings, individual villas and quadrangles, the compounds with four houses around a courtyard typical of northern China. I and my friends stayed the night here and, early the following morning, set off by climbing Ruyi Ridge to the south of the village. We followed what used to be a sheep track. Now it is well maintained and the section near the top has been laid with large slabs of stone. Still, it is only around sixty centimetres wide at its narrowest and you need to watch your footing.

Once we had made it to Lotus Peak on Ruyi Ridge we had the whole 460 square kilometres of Yesanpo within our gaze: the valley of the River Juma meandering to the south, undulating mountain ranges to the north.... The terrain rises from south to north. Because of its unique topography, this area was known as the Upper, Middle and Lower Slopes in the old days, from which comes its present name; Yesanpo literally means 'Three Wild Slopes'. According to the *History of Zhuozhou Prefecture*, the Upper and Lower Slopes, although close, could have considerable differences in temperature. It was said that the start of the seasons could be staggered by as much as two weeks.

The *History of Zhuozhou Prefecture* also relates some of the early history of this area. The future Emperor Chengzu of the Ming dynasty (reign dates 1402-1424) is said to have come here on one of his expeditions before ascending the throne. Seeing a squirrel holding a pine cone, he thought the little creature was greeting him. 'Even an animal pledges allegiance to me,' he burst out, 'let alone the people.' Highly delighted, he ordered that the people of Yesanpo should be exempted from military conscription and from taxes. It is no wonder, therefore, that Yesanpo people were fervent admirers of the Ming dynasty and refused to accept the coming of the Manchus and Qing rule in the seventeenth century.

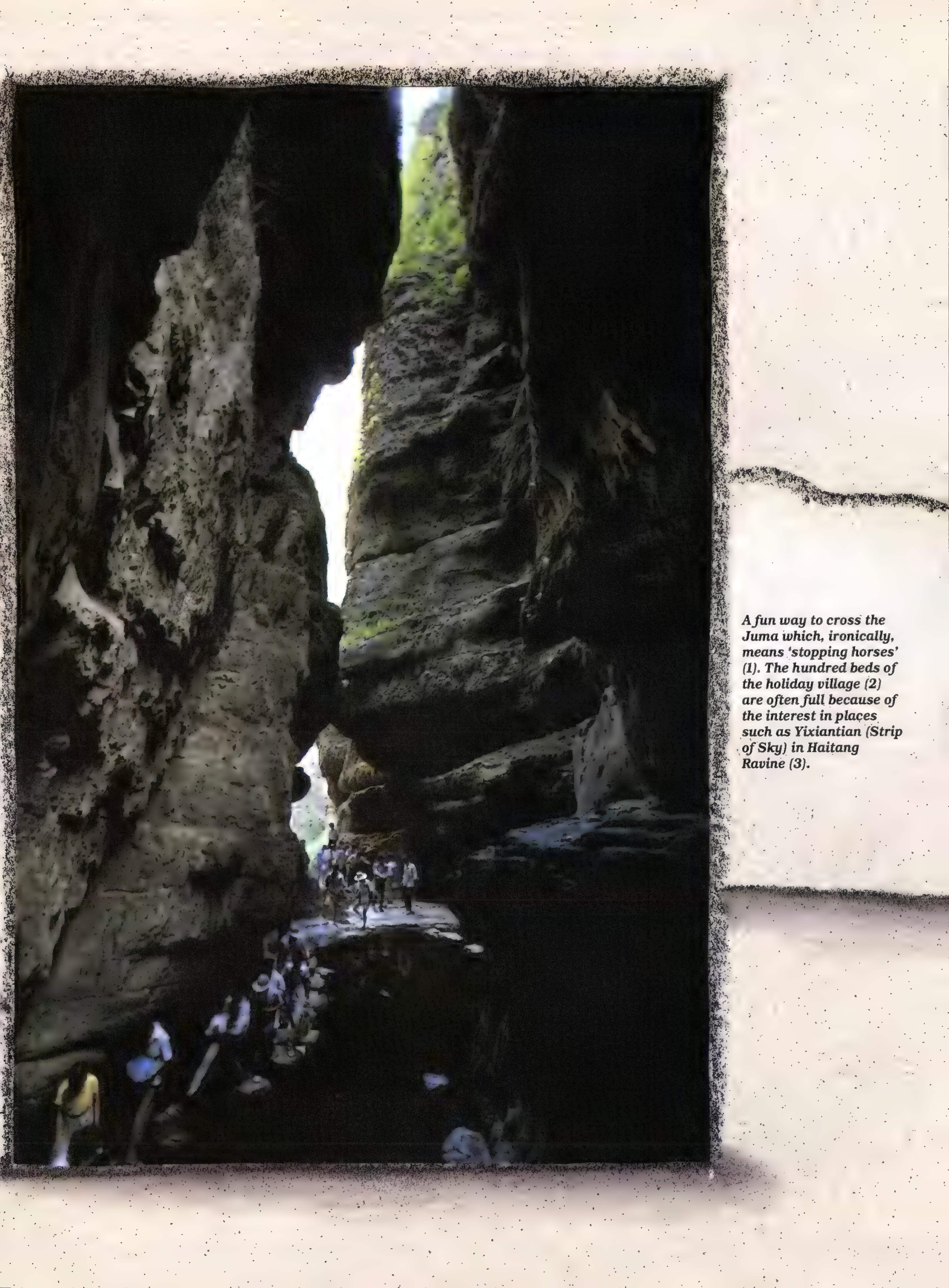
Ruyi Ridge was just a taster. From the holiday village we took motorized transport — a ten-minute ride — to Gougezhuang, a village of some two hundred households and the gateway to the main scenic area. There is a railway station here too. Yesanpo is actually divided into six areas — Baili Gorge, River Juma, Fodong Pagoda, Baicaopan, Longmen Gorge and Mount Jinhua — containing in all sixty-eight scenic 'sights'. South of the village flows the River Juma, which one can cross by a small wooden bridge. People were coming and going along the river.

Some villagers who own horses were eager to make extra money by offering them to tourists. We paid five yuan each for a horse and started across the river. In the meantime, the horses' owners wandered



nonchalantly over the bridge. The horses set off rather fast, kicking up sprays of water, but soon slowed down.

The name of the river actually means 'stopping horses' and refers to an incident which took place here in ancient times. Between 308 and 318, a general of the Jie people named Shi Le led 100,000 men to attack Hebei. When they reached the vicinity of the Taihang Mountains and attempted to cross the Juma, they were stopped by Jin-dynasty troops headed by Liu Kun. Shi Le eventually had to beat a retreat.



A fun way to cross the Juma which, ironically, means 'stopping horses' (1). The hundred beds of the holiday village (2) are often full because of the interest in places such as Yixiantian (Strip of Sky) in Haitang Ravine (3).

Goats forage in the sun beside Xiaoxi Stream (1). People live among the structures of the Great Dragon Gate Fort (2), others make a temporary home (3) in the watch-towers of the Great Wall at Caishu'an (4).





Once we were on the opposite bank, we rode on for around five hundred metres along a straight road to the mouth of Baili (One Hundred *Li*) Gorge. This gorge is actually made up of three ravines, namely Haitang (Crab-Apple), Shixuan (Ten Hanging) and Xiezi (Scorpion). The overall name comes from the fact that the gorge is fifty-two kilometres long (one kilometre equals two *li*). Here we dismounted and took to our feet.

The entrance to Haitang Ravine was thick with crab-apples, although the flowering season had long since passed. The red-stemmed, green-leaved trees stretched on and on for fifteen kilometres. At its widest the gorge was less than ten metres wide, while the narrowest place was just wide enough for one person to squeeze through. However, the path was even and the going was quite good. Sheer, high cliffs kept the sun out. They leaned inward as if keeping some secrets from the gods. A few of my com-

panions tried to climb them to pose for photographs, but were defeated after only about a metre — that's how steep they are!

Eventually we came to a flatter place with, on the left, steps fitted with an iron safety chain and, on the right, a waterfall dropping twenty metres. Some of the group climbed the steps to a point where the three characters *Lao Hu Zui* (Tiger's Mouth) are carved on the cliff. Plucking up courage, we followed suit. Most of the visitors were youngsters and, probably made impatient by our slowness up the steep steps, they passed us by taking a very narrow side path.

From this point we entered a sort of tunnel where we had to stoop for fear of bumping our heads on the rock roof above. We could not relax until we reached Yixiantian (Strip of Sky), an accurate name since we could see only the merest strip of the blue sky. The light was dim down here and the ground was covered with water. However, there were a few cement blocks placed so that you could use them as stepping stones.

We returned to the mouth of this ravine and entered Xiezi Ravine to the south. One of the interesting features of Yesanpo is the vegetation growing wild. In Xiezi Ravine we saw lilacs, hibiscus and many more trees and shrubs. One plant worth mentioning is the so-called 'scorpion weed', whose leaves resemble the mulberry's. If you touch it, your fingers will be stung.

Our next destination was half an hour's drive north of Gougezhuang — Longmen (Dragon Gate) Gorge. The attraction here is an intact section of the Great Wall dating from the Ming dynasty, as well as other Ming structures such as the Great Dragon Gate Fort, which was an important pass at that time.

The watch-towers and crenellations on top of the fort's walls are still standing, although the buildings which once clustered inside its protective walls — *yamen*, arsenal, bell-tower, temple — have long since disappeared. However, rather to our surprise, the fort was by no means empty.... It housed a village! The inhabitants are said to be descended from officers and men billeted here in the Qing dynasty. On the overthrow of the Qing, the troops — used to relying on regular military supplies from the central government — decided to stay here and work the land to survive.

We pulled up by Xiaoxi Stream, a branch of the Juma, half a kilometre southwest of the fort. The stream is flanked by precipitous cliffs, and this is in fact the Longmen Gorge, once guarded by the garrison at the fort we had just visited. The cliffs are carved in more than twenty places with inscriptions executed by officers posted here over sundry dynasties. Since it was on an old military route linking Beijing with Zhangjiakou on the Great Wall to the northwest, this pass was of great strategic importance.

Soon we came to the boundary between the counties of Laishui and Zhuolu, turned east, and entered another long, dark ravine similar to the Baili Gorge. After driving for several hundred metres, we climbed a sloping track until the way was blocked by piles of bricks and our vehicle had to stop. We continued on foot. Our destination was the village of Caishu'an.

This simple, neat village is built on a slope beside a stream. We found that each courtyard contained a

few fruit trees as well as Chinese prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum bungeanum*). Since it was harvest time, the ground in many places was covered with sundry fruits and berries drying in the sun. A little further beyond the village we came to another section of the Great Wall, again built in the Ming dynasty. This was just a short section of about five hundred metres, comprising only six watch-towers, just enough to fill in a gap between the steep slopes. Four metres wide, the wall was large enough for four horses or eight soldiers to walk abreast. There were embrasures for observation and defence.

Here too, we were surprised to find people living. They came out and offered us some millet gruel. Seeing our questioning looks, they explained that they were not permanent residents; they actually lived in Caishu'an, but had come here to graze their cattle. They would be returning with their herds to plough their land within a few days.

After saying good-bye, we headed east towards the scenic area of Baicaopan, where we planned to stay the night. Baicaopan is known for its thick woodlands (all 6,600 hectares of them) and their cooling shade.

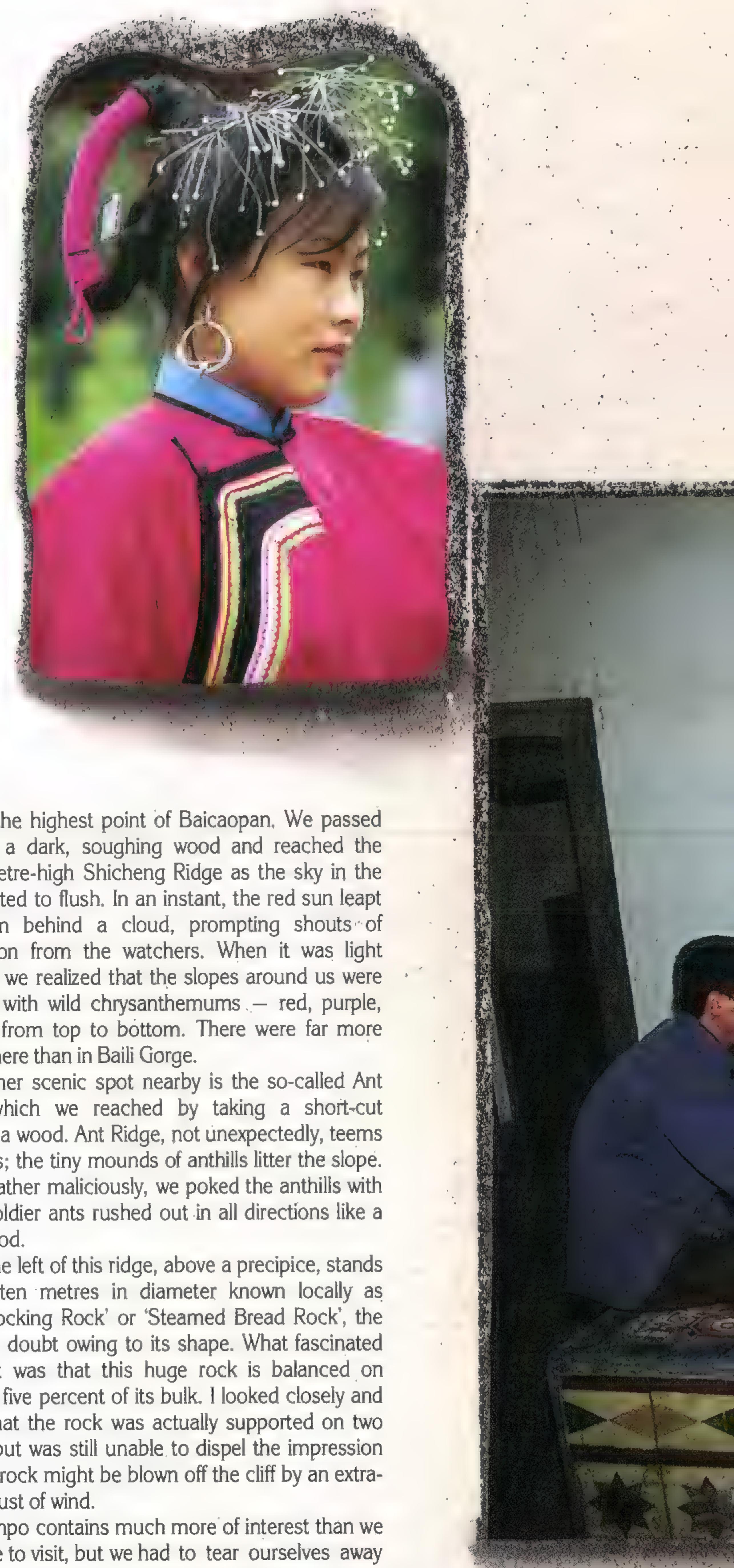
It was dusk by the time we arrived at the village of Beibian. Here we encountered some people on their way to pick mushrooms on the nearby mountain slopes. Thinking this would be great fun, we joined them. The colourful rays of the setting sun cascaded over the earth, gilding the outlines of row upon row of peaks. The shouts of the herdsmen urging their livestock home were carried far and wide.

When we finally reached our destination, the hospitable villagers treated us like VIPs and served us millet gruel, pancakes, fried runner beans, mushrooms and more. After this abundant supper, our elderly hosts rummaged in their storage trunks to show us how they used to dress in these parts when they were young, based on Ming-dynasty costume. Today, I was told, the staff at a nearby guesthouse use this as their uniform. Thus I learned that women in the past wore collarless jackets buttoning on one side, trousers, and boat-shaped shoes with embroidered silk uppers. A woman usually wore her hair in a ponytail tied with a red cord and adorned it with magnolias and a long hairpin inlaid with images of the 'Five Poisons' (scorpion, spider, centipede, toad and lizard) to neutralize evil.

We went to bed rather early that night because we intended to be up to watch the sunrise at 3:30 a.m. However, the elders remained on the *kang* (a heated brick platform, also used as a bed) to discuss and decide village affairs — a characteristic of the villages in Yesanpo ever since the Qing dynasty, I was told.

The background to this tradition is even reflected in the name Yesanpo. According to the *History of Zhuozhou Prefecture*, Yesanpo was once called Sanpo. The people of Sanpo were devoted to the Ming, as we have seen, and opposed Qing rule. So the Qing court decided to ban them from taking the imperial examinations, in other words, prevented them from rising in status and becoming officials. In addition, the character *ye* (wild) was added as a prefix to indicate that the people here were considered backward. Seeing they could expect no help from above, they decided to elect elderly men from wealthy and respected local families to protect their interests. And this they do to this day.

With our local guide we set off under the starry



sky for the highest point of Baicaopan. We passed through a dark, soothng wood and reached the 1,893-metre-high Shicheng Ridge as the sky in the east started to flush. In an instant, the red sun leapt out from behind a cloud, prompting shouts of admiration from the watchers. When it was light enough, we realized that the slopes around us were covered with wild chrysanthemums — red, purple, pink — from top to bottom. There were far more flowers here than in Baili Gorge.

Another scenic spot nearby is the so-called Ant Ridge which we reached by taking a short-cut through a wood. Ant Ridge, not unexpectedly, teems with ants; the tiny mounds of anthills litter the slope. When, rather maliciously, we poked the anthills with twigs, soldier ants rushed out in all directions like a black flood.

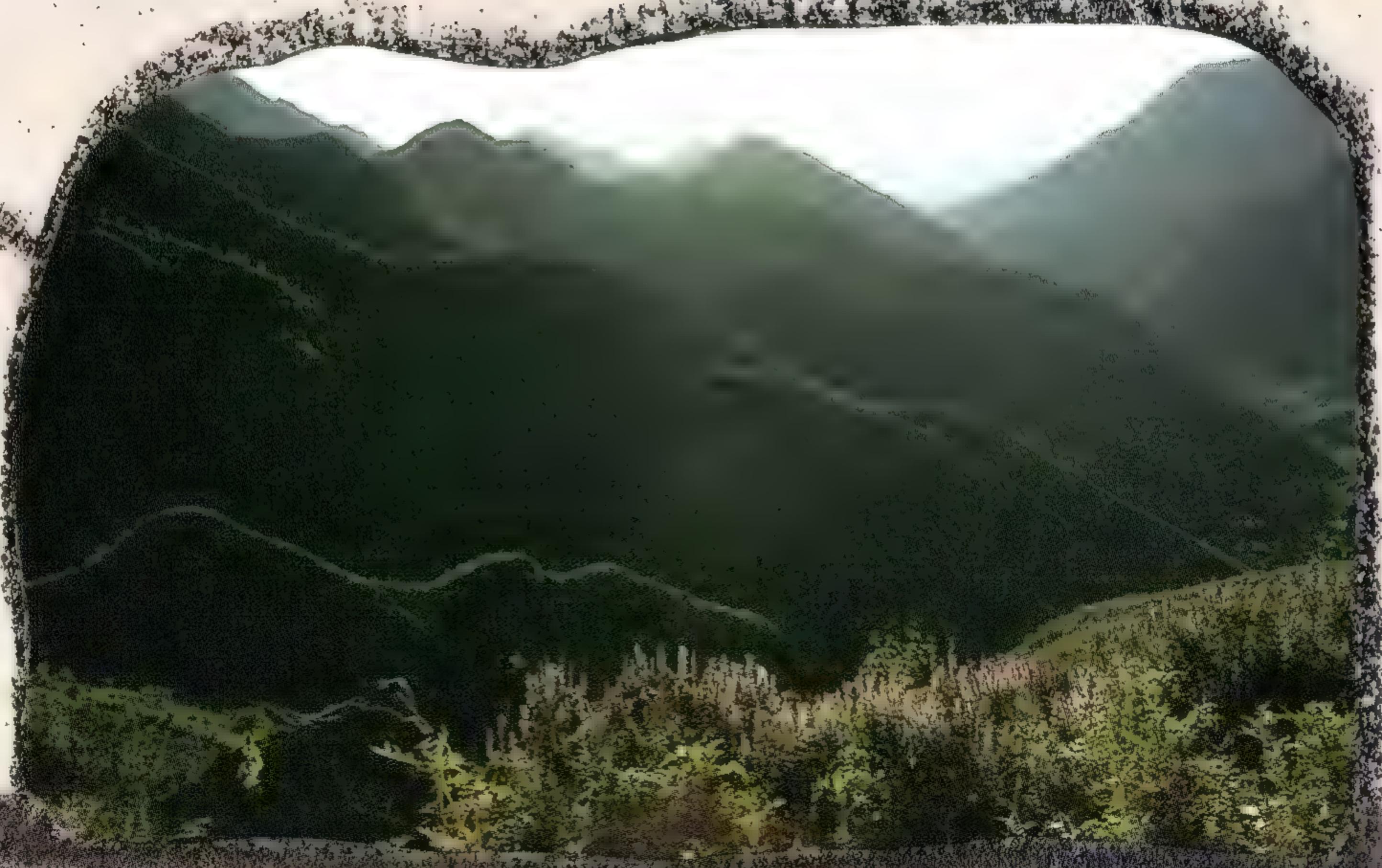
To the left of this ridge, above a precipice, stands a rock ten metres in diameter known locally as 'Wind-Rocking Rock' or 'Steamed Bread Rock', the latter no doubt owing to its shape. What fascinated us most was that this huge rock is balanced on perhaps five percent of its bulk. I looked closely and found that the rock was actually supported on two points, but was still unable to dispel the impression that the rock might be blown off the cliff by an extra-strong gust of wind.

Yesanpo contains much more of interest than we had time to visit, but we had to tear ourselves away ... for the time being. Our three days hardly scratched the surface of the possibilities here for a nature-lover.

G

Translated by Wang Mingjie

The uniform of the guesthouse staff is based on local costume in the Ming dynasty (1). Mountain vistas from Baicaopan (2), where villagers enjoy a leisurely meal on the kang (3).



Reproductions of

Cizhou

Cizhou ware was a type of household pottery produced in and around the region of Cizhou from the Song dynasty (960-1279). The name came from the fact that the principal kiln was located near Handan which was then under Cizhou administration, although Cizhou kilns were spread far beyond the confines of the region at that time. Production flourished in southern Hebei and northern and central Henan, but Cizhou wares were also produced in Shanxi, Shaanxi and Shandong.

The Cizhou kiln in the neighbourhood of Pengcheng in Cixian County, south of Handan, was one of the most famous kilns of northern China. It began to produce pottery as early as the fourth century, but by the tenth century the porcelain made here had reached a very high level of workmanship.

In the *Annals of Cizhou*, compiled during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), it is recorded: 'Among the porcelain wares made in the kilns of the town of Pengcheng there is a rich variety of jars, basins, bowls and incense burners in yellow, green, turquoise, white and black ... just for the use of the shops and villagers.'

The objects were shaped by hand or made in moulds from the local clay and white alkaline earth, and coated with a water-based slip. They were then painted with pigments obtained from mottled stone containing iron oxide, before being fired in coal-fired bun-shaped kilns (also known as Cizhou kilns).

Decorated characteristically in high-contrast black on a white or beige slip, Cizhou wares showed a wide variety of motifs: peonies and other flowers, birds, animals, insects, fish, children at play, acrobats and circus acts, historical themes, legends, poems, auspicious symbols, as well as geometrical patterns. During the Song dynasty in particular, Guan wares — ceramic items from the official imperial kilns — were mainly finished in a monochrome glaze; celadon was reserved for the imperial court. The



The peony-motif bottles, one with a white slip, the other a pearly-grey, are incised delicately to produce a faintly three-dimensional effect. The pale grey contrasts subtly with the white glaze.



This vase is evidently modern in inspiration. The trunks of the plum trees, the flowers and the birds show a sense of perspective in the round, and more colours are used than in Song times.

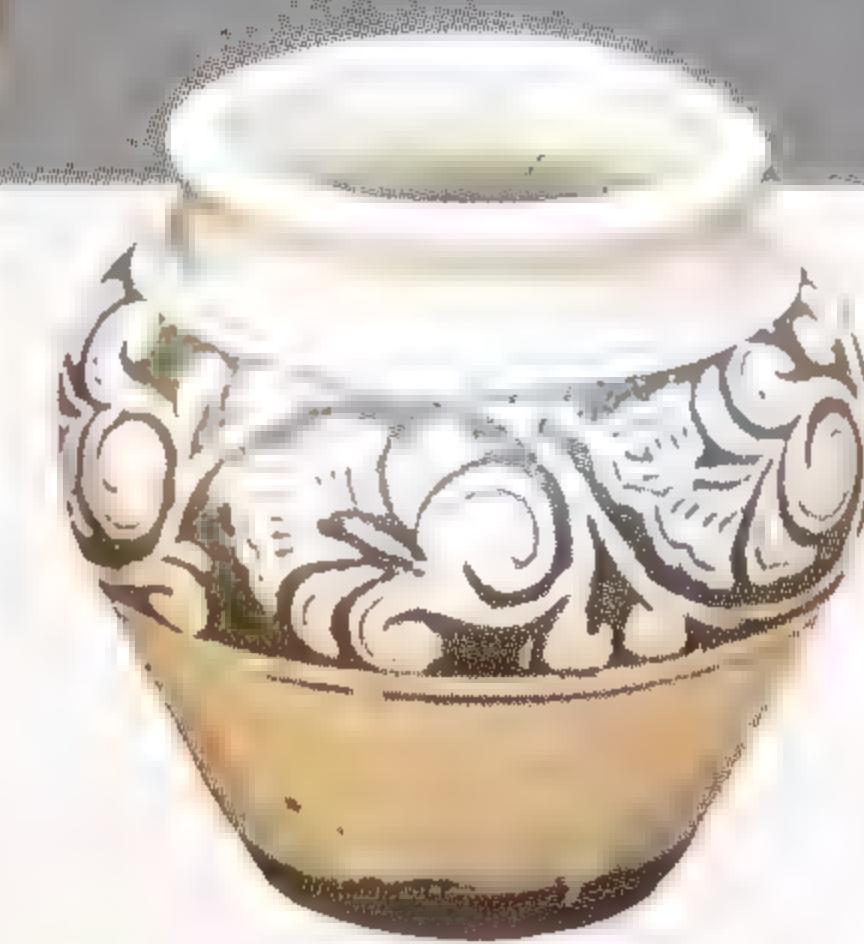


A vase and an urn with peony designs linked by tangled vines. The large black flowers against a white background are incised with fine lines to reveal the underlying slip for extra emphasis.



A twin-phoenix jar modelled on a famous example from the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), the upper part bearing 'iron-rust' motifs. The black body of the phoenix is incised with fine lines, giving a free and powerful effect.

A black-glazed urn with a ribbed design has a broad mouth, a sturdy body and small lugs. Although simple, the design is executed in a flowing, natural and very elegant manner.



Cizhou kilns, on the other hand, produced popular articles with varied and lively decorations.

The so-called 'iron-rust' design is one traditional technique adopted exclusively by the

Cizhou kilns. Using

powdered porphyry for the pigment, the potter or decorator had to work very quickly and skilfully since the motifs were painted onto the item

before the base slip

dried. Cizhou ware also often exhibits embossing, incising and carving. This

was done after firing.

Black ceramics were first produced by the Cizhou kilns during the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420).

By the time of the Song the techniques had multiplied, and there was greater variation.

Black glaze is based on loess soil, which has a high content of iron oxide and turns a blackish-brown after firing. Depending on the glaze thickness, kiln temperature and flame volume, the colours of the resulting porcelain may range from blackish-brown to umber, dark-red, dark-blue or dark-green.

The products of the Cizhou kilns were closely connected with the demands of everyday life. The narrow-mouthed jars, which might nowadays be used as flower vases, were intended as wine vessels, the large-mouthed pots as water vats or for food storage.

The reproductions shown here were mostly made during the 1980s, using the ancient techniques and faithfully reproducing the original shapes and motifs.

Translated by Gu Weizhou



The tall, broad-shouldered vase with a peony design has a strong shape. Most of it is glazed black, but the small amount of white lightens the overall impression and serves to bring out the design.

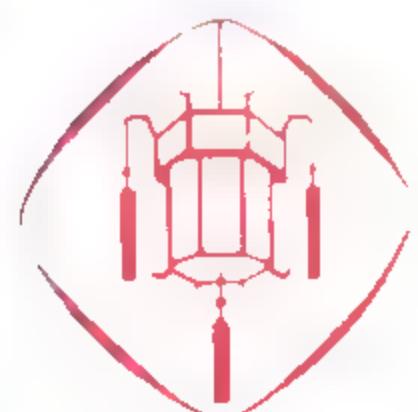


Two vases with orchids and 'iron-rust' motifs. The orchids were executed with delicate lines and then incised with a special tool before the glaze flower dried to produce 'flying white' designs. The effect is of petals waving naturally in the breeze.





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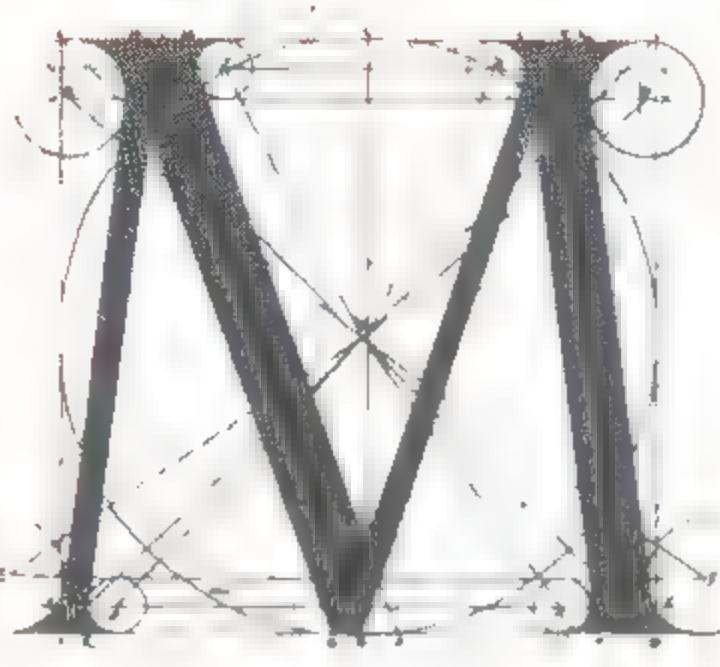


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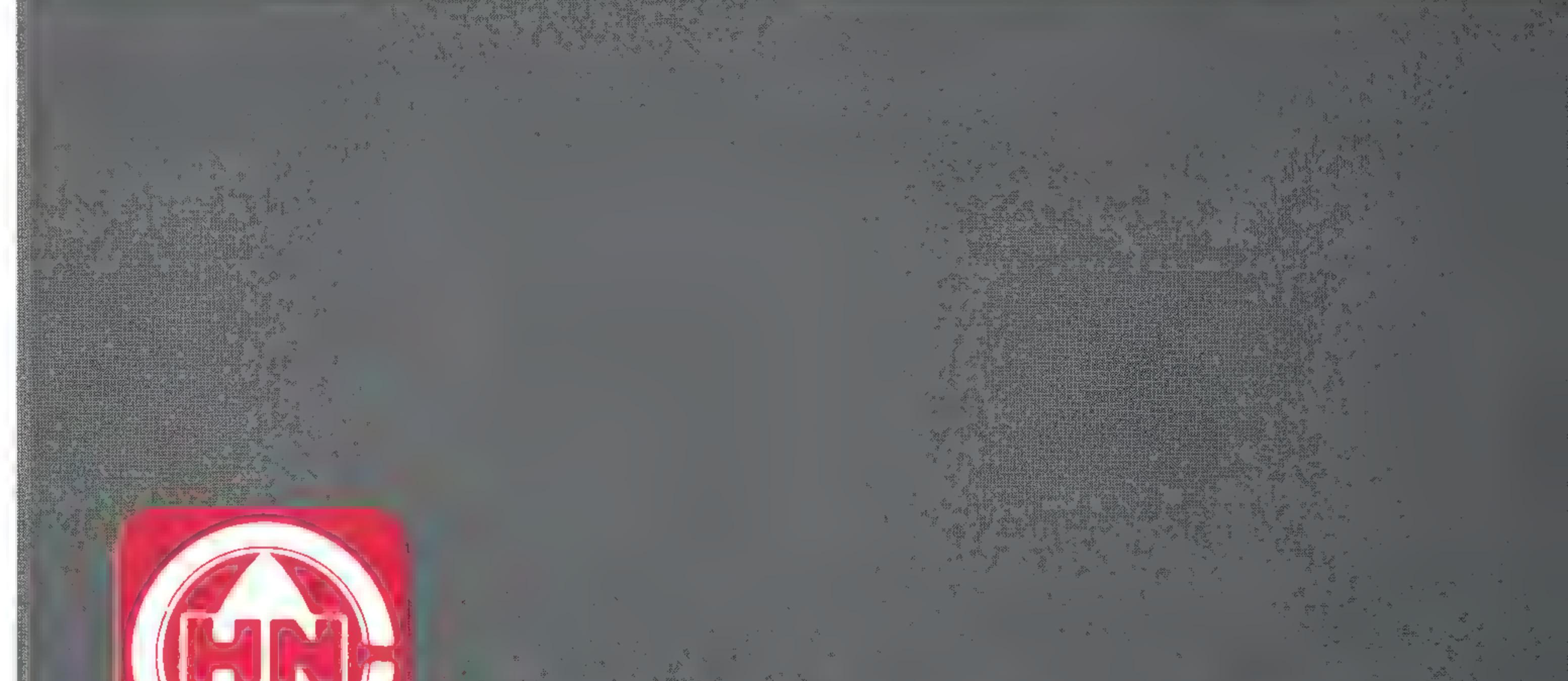
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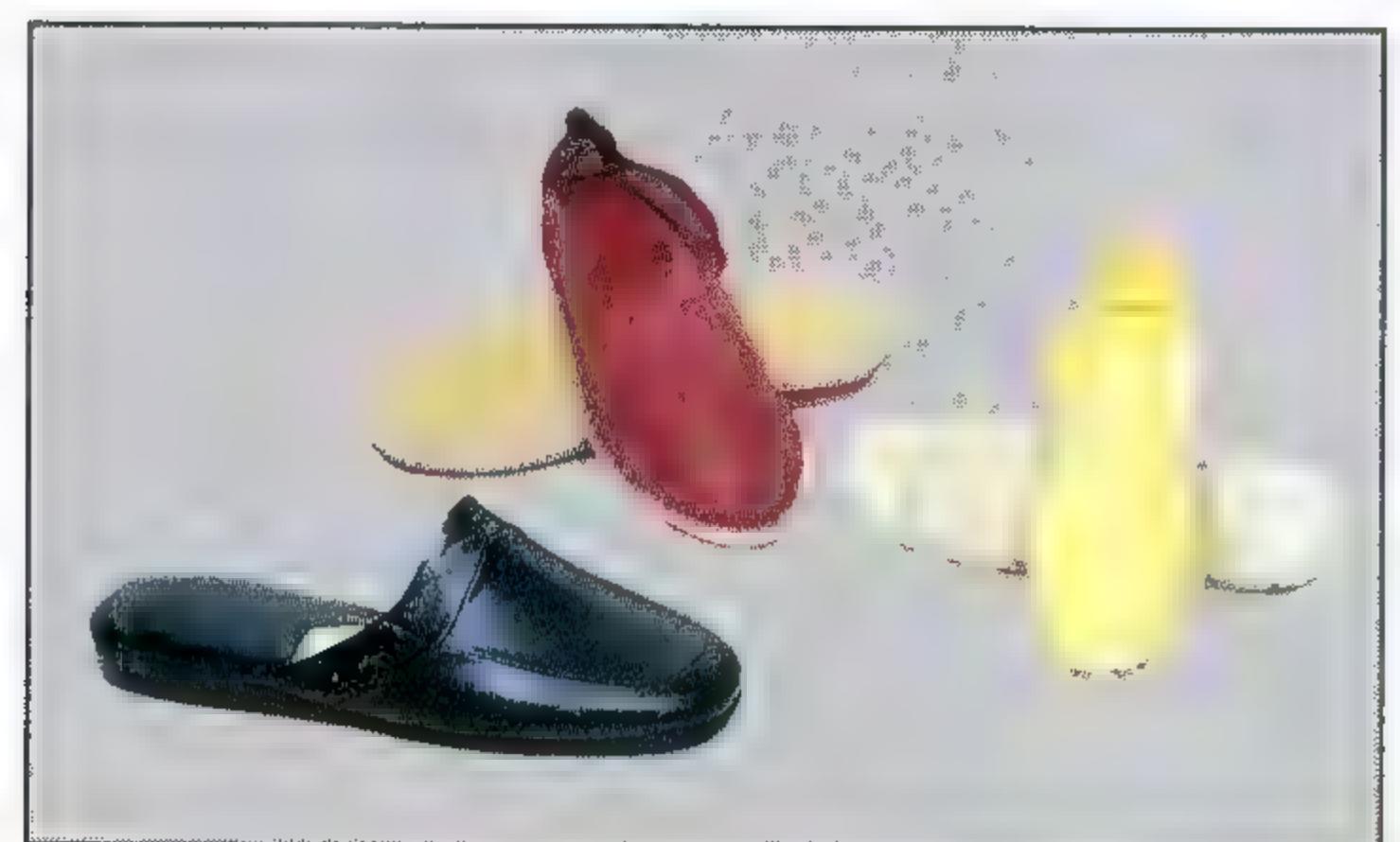
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Zhalong



1

A Bird-Watcher's Paradise

ARTICLE BY CHENG CHENG



2

The cranes return from the south (1) (both by Qiu Wenchao), to the delight of an increasing number of foreign bird-watchers (2, by Jin Zhiyong).



Each family in the crowded herony jealously guards its territory (2, by Liu Xiangyang). Red-crowned cranes in the marshes at dawn (1), during the graceful courtship dance (3) (both by Xu Xuezhe), and chasing off an unwelcome visitor (4, by Wang Xinlin).





The primary concern of visitors to the Zhalong Nature Reserve is to look for red-crowned cranes.

Located in the west of Heilongjiang Province some thirty kilometres southeast of Qiqihar, this reserve in the valley of the River Wuyur is a vast expanse of swamps and marshland overgrown with luxuriant plants, mostly reeds, and with bodies of water where fish, shrimps, crabs and other crustaceans are found in profusion. It is a paradise for water birds and birds which prefer a swamp habitat, including the red-crowned crane (*Grus japonensis*).

These birds, which stand 1.2 metres high, have predominantly white plumage with dark brown feathers on throat, neck and cheeks. Adult cranes boast an elegant red 'crown' on top of the head. The tips of their wings are black and when folded cover their short white tail.

The call of the red-crowned crane is booming and resonant and it can fly long distances, migrating to the lower reaches of the River Yangtse for the winter. Probably its most fascinating characteristic is that it has a lifespan of fifty to sixty years, hence the old Chinese saying: 'The longevity of a crane and the age of a pine tree'. It is an endangered and rare species, with a population of only around 1,100 worldwide, of which slightly over 500 live in China.

On the spring morning when we visited the reserve, the sun was not yet overhead when we observed a group of cranes flapping their wings in the reeds and washing clean their snow-white feathers. Those on the water's edge stretched out their necks and dipped their sharp beaks into the water to catch fish and shrimps.

On a fine day the cranes can be seen flying in pairs. It is said that once a male and female crane mate they will never part. The female bird does not leave the male's side; together they stretch out their necks, raise their heads and call to the skies, producing a resonant sound. This is their language of love. They are thus monogamous, remaining as a couple from one year to the next, faithful unto death. When one dies the other is inconsolable, crying for days on end.

In the spring, these migratory birds leave the growing heat of the south and fly back north, where the snows have melted and the air is milder. They fly in flocks in an inverted 'V' formation, a truly splendid sight. Their 3,000-kilometre journey, which takes about one month, ends in the swamps of the Zhalong Nature Reserve where they find shelter amongst the reeds and grasses.

The breeding season starts in April. The cranes build their nest of grass and reeds in shallow water and the female lays two large eggs. Both parents take turns to sit on the eggs which hatch after about a month, the chicks being yellow and downy at birth. The parent cranes zealously guard the nest and, if an intruder should approach, one of them will divert his attention by leaving the nest and feigning injury. As soon as the chick is safe, the parent bird will turn round and rush at the attacker.

Towards the end of summer, the young lose their brown colouring and assume their superb white plumage. With the arrival of autumn, they make their first attempts at flight. Two months later migration starts again and the timeless cycle is repeated.

Cranes can be tamed and bred but it is a delicate and long-drawn-out process. The Zhalong Nature Reserve has a farm which keeps about twenty cranes in reed sheds. Occasionally the keepers let them loose to roam outside, but they fly back to their sheds on hearing their keeper's whistle. Those which are accustomed to the presence of people will accept grain from



visitors, but can be upset by flashing cameras, which make them aggressive. They are greatly attached to their keepers; however, following them around everywhere.

The latter in fact show great dedication in their work and go to great pains in caring for the birds. We were told the story of a tragic accident which occurred in the Yancheng Nature Reserve in Jiangsu. Xu Xiujuan, a keeper at Zhalong, only in her twenties, had been invited down south to set up a breeding farm. One day a white crane disappeared. Xu searched high and low without success and ended up falling into a watercourse and drowning.

Zhalong will not disappoint bird-lovers. Lying on a bird migration path which extends from the Soviet Arctic to Southeast Asia, it is one of China's largest reserves for water birds, home to more than 230 different species at the last count. We visited the reserve with other keen bird-watchers who, binoculars round their necks and book in hand, ticked off each species they spotted.

Easier access to birds can be gained by boat, zigzagging though the marshes, as we did. Nests suddenly rose before us and we disturbed a colony of gulls (terns, herring gulls and red-beaked gulls). We saw red-crowned and grey cranes hovering over the lake while on the bank an egret stood immobile on its long spindly legs. Apparently the egrets live on good terms with the grey herons and purple herons, and their nests, numbering several hundred, are all packed closely together. This contrasts with the scene on the Isle of Egrets in a lake near the village of Ancun on the lower reaches of the River Mudanjiang in Heilongjiang Province; this is the home of over a thousand grey herons, which build their nests in trees and keep themselves very much to themselves.

Cranes in general are well represented at Zhalong. Six of the fifteen species in the world can be seen here: the white-naped crane, hooded crane, Siberian crane, common crane and demoiselle crane.

Venturing into deeper water we came across many more familiar species, among them grebes, wild geese, storks, and mandarin ducks. But of course we found it impossible to identify all the species of birds we spotted. After all, the reserve covers an area of 210,000 hectares — it is fifty kilometres long by ten kilometres wide. A true paradise for birds and bird-watchers alike! ☉

Translated by Ren Jiazhen



Other permanent or temporary inhabitants of the nature reserve: red-crested pochard (1, by Qiu Wenchao), hooded crane (2, by Wang Jian, and 3), Eurasian bittern (4) (3 and 4 by Liu Xiangyang), and great egret (5, by Xu Xuezhe).



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From Lhasa to Sichuan ... On Foot!

PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY LIANG QIN

Highways on the Roof of the World

The Sichuan-Tibet Highway was begun in 1950 and completed four years later. Crossing major mountain ranges and great river valleys, it covers a distance of 2,400 kilometres between Lhasa, capital of Tibet, and Ya'an on the western edge of the Sichuan Basin. At an average altitude of over 3,000 metres above sea-level, it is one of the highest roads in the world, and its scenery is among the most diverse and spectacular to be experienced anywhere. However, winter conditions are such that it frequently becomes impassable.

Its twin, the Qinghai-Tibet Highway, is the highest road in the world! It traverses formidable terrain — the Qaidam Basin, the area around the source of the Huanghe (Yellow River), the Kunlun, Tanggula and Nyainqāntanglha Ranges — at altitudes between 4,000 and 5,000 metres. It runs for about 2,100 kilometres between Xining, Qinghai's capital, and Lhasa; both these cities are set very high — Lhasa at 3,680 metres, Xining at 2,275 metres above sea-level. The Qinghai section was completed in 1952, the Tibet section in 1954. A multi-million-yuan road improvement scheme concluded in 1985 has made the present asphalted highway the most important land transport artery into Tibet, which is inaccessible by rail.

Ever since I first became interested in travelling, I had dreamt of some day crossing the Tibet-Qinghai Plateau in western China. My opportunity finally came in June 1988 when I met a certain Zhai Jiahui in Lhasa in the hotel I was staying in. I had come to Lhasa by bus along the Yunnan-Tibet Highway and Zhai had just arrived from Chengdu in Sichuan by bicycle. We had a long talk. He intended to return to Chengdu on foot, which happened to be exactly what I had in mind. So we swore a solemn oath to carry out our plan together and to see it through to the end unless, of course, some real emergency stopped us.

The route we decided to take was as follows: from Lhasa, the southwestern end of the Qinghai-Tibet Highway, we would walk north to Nagqu, then turn east towards Qamdo, an important city in eastern Tibet, and continue along the Sichuan-Tibet Highway to our destination Chengdu, a total of about 2,352 kilometres. We would try to make thirty kilometres a day and we would also climb the occasional mountain along our route when time permitted. We were already very high at the outset — Lhasa sits at 3,680 metres above sea-level. In order to make thorough preparations, we went to Nepal specifically to buy some mountaineering equipment and warm clothing.

Tibetan Hospitality

On the morning of August 20, Zhai Jiahui and I, accompanied by a dozen of our friends who had come to see us off, met at Lhasa's





monument to the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet and Sichuan-Tibet Highways and set out to the north. It was a drizzly day. We had walked only a very short distance along the Qinghai-Tibet Highway, the world's highest road, when the weather suddenly deteriorated. Heavy clouds massed overhead, and there was a torrential downpour. But we continued on our way. A truck coming towards us stopped abruptly. The Tibetan driver, jumping down from his cab despite the heavy rain and running over to us, said: 'Let me give you a lift back to Lhasa!' Touched, we told him about our plan but thanked him all the same for his kindness.

After two or three hours' walking we met another Tibetan on a bicycle. He was astonished at the sight of us walking in the rain. Getting off his bike, he offered us several apples from a sack before cycling off. Although the apples were a bit sharp, I had a sensation of sweetness in my heart at such a warm and friendly reception so far from home.

We covered about forty kilometres that first day and slept in an elderly Tibetan's home.

Sleeping Under the Stars

Sometimes, pushing ahead with our journey, we were unable to find a place to stay the night. It happened frequently that we had to bed down in our sleeping bags by the roadside. Late on the fifth day, we were still fifteen kilometres from Yangbajain. There was no shelter in the vicinity — neither road workers' huts nor Tibetan houses or tents — so we were again forced to sleep in the open.

We were woken by heavy rain around midnight. With our sleeping bags soaking wet, we could not sleep and almost froze to death. Next morning it was a tremendous effort to march on for even one hour. Too tired to continue, we simply lay down in the grass by the roadside and fell into a deep slumber. From then on, for the sake of our health (and our survival!), we decided not to spend the night in the open any more unless absolutely necessary.

So that night we stayed at the Yangbajain Transport Station, surrounded by vast grasslands. The clouds in the sky seemed to float so low it seemed we could jump up and touch them.

Continuing — Solo

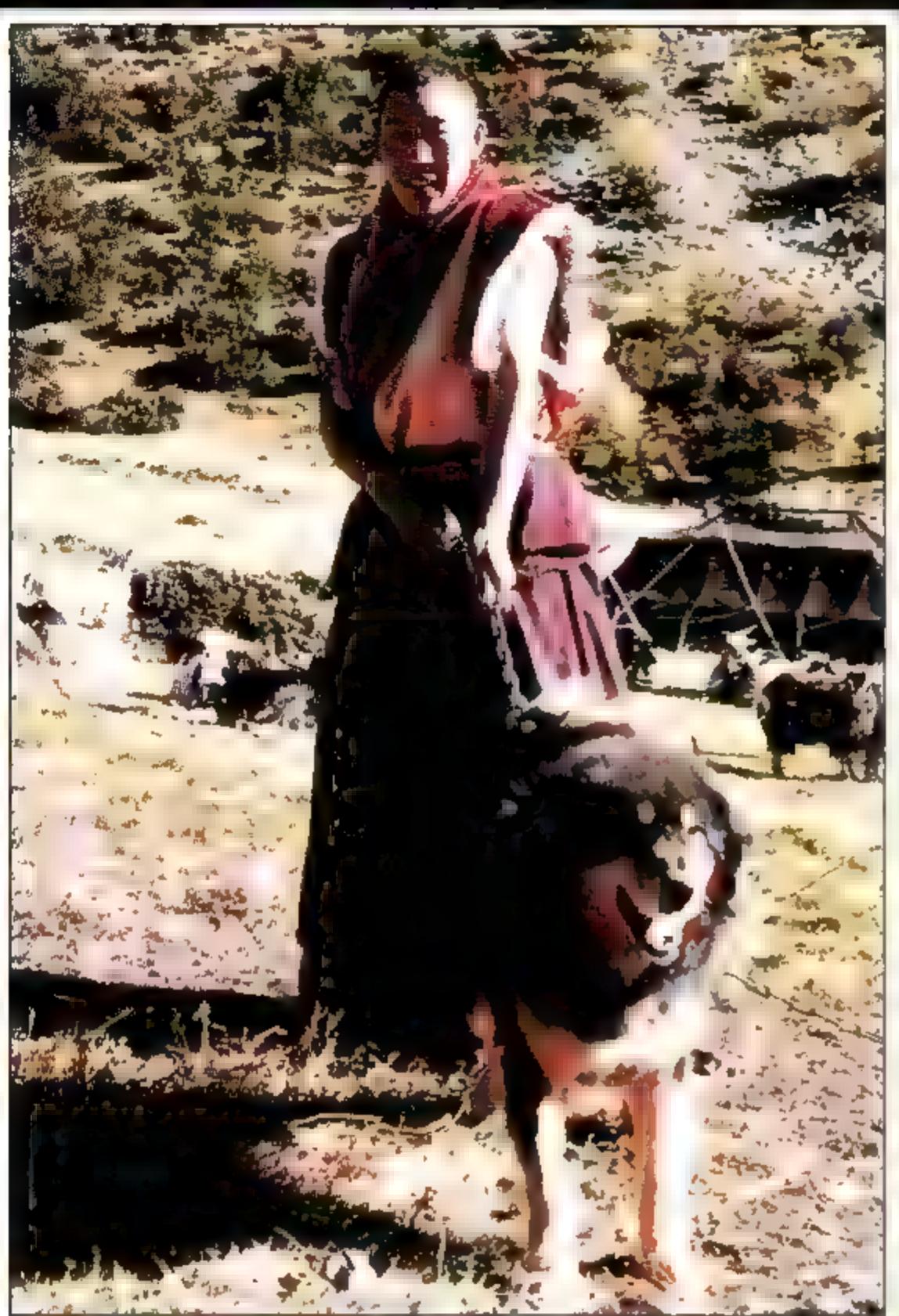
The weather on the plateau is unpredictable at the best of times, and sometimes one can experience four seasons within the space of a couple of hours.

This is exactly what happened when we got near Damxung at around 4,400 metres; dark clouds suddenly appeared on the horizon and very soon hailstones as big as broad beans came rattling down from the sky, turning the earth white on the instant. Then it began to rain, and the hail melted slowly. As the sun came out from behind the clouds, which dispersed as suddenly as they had come, we felt stifled, and soon found ourselves streaming with sweat.

On August 31, at dusk, we came haltingly to Nagqu in the middle of another hailstorm. This town is situated among vast open spaces some 4,500 metres above sea-level. Zhai Jiahui was suffering from altitude sickness and decided, reluctantly, that he would have to go back to Lhasa by bus, then fly to Chengdu. I myself would continue to Qamdo according to our original plan.

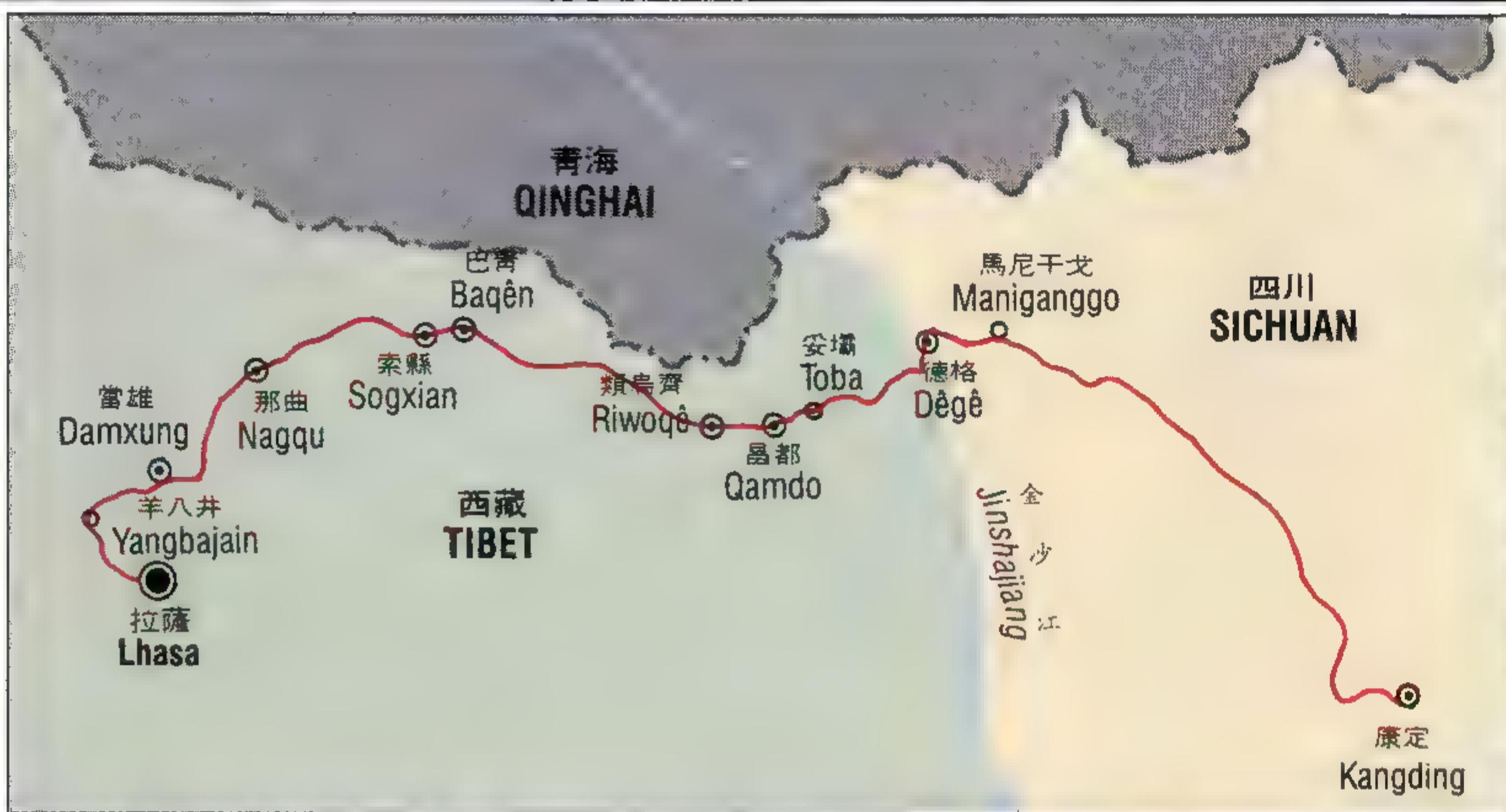
At nine o'clock on September 2, we embraced in silence. As he boarded the bus, my heart was heavy at the thought that he could not go on with me.

Now I left the Qinghai-Tibet Highway and took the road heading more or less due east to Qamdo, 764 kilometres away. This is actually just an earth track with no electricity poles along the sides, no traffic markings, and barely any traffic or passers-by. However, although I was alone, I wasn't frightened by my very real isolation.



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The writer at 5,000 metres on Anlagong (1). Guard dogs excepted (3), the reception was friendly: the herdsman's wife at Toba (2); young girl and pet (4).

Blessings from a Living Buddha

In the afternoon of September 3 I reached Kormang, forty kilometres from Nagqu. In the huge, sparsely populated land the only signs of human habitation were cabins for road workers and a few Tibetan-style dwellings. I met a Tibetan boy with his herd of cattle. After chatting for a few minutes, he invited me to rest in his family's tent. I accepted his offer gratefully. When I emerged later, I found the sky had darkened and — yes! — yet another heavy hailstorm lashed me.

From Kormang I attempted a shortcut through a swamp. The marshland stretched out all around, with tussocks of coarse grass emerging from the mud and water. I had to hop, rucksack on back, from one tussock to the next as if I was playing some kind of giant checkers game. If I missed my step, I sank into the mud up to my knees.

On September 10 I arrived at a settlement called Sogxian. The following day, together with a Tibetan I met there, I visited a small lamasery called Zandan on a nearby slope. To my surprise we were warmly received by the monks and lamas and invited to meet a Living Buddha who was only around forty years of age. Coming into the main hall, one lama poured a cup of water from a bronze vessel while another lama held out his cupped hands and asked me to imitate him. I did so, and the first lama poured water into my hands and told me to drink it. The Living Buddha then blessed me by laying his hands on my head.

Snow-Covered Mountains

I continued my journey to Baqen, which I reached around lunchtime, according to my stomach's rumblings. But when I delved into my bag for food, I found there was nothing left. I had already used up the provisions I had bought in Nagqu and — what was worse — Baqen's one and only grocery store was closed! I had no choice but to approach some road workers for help. They generously provided me with a bag of barley flour and some butter which, mixed into the paste known as *zanba*, kept me going for a number of days.

Twenty kilometres beyond Baqen I saw a snow-capped mountain not far from the road. This was Anlagong, which rises to more than 5,000 metres above sea-level. It seemed a pity not to make use of the equipment I had bought in Nepal, so I decided to climb the mountain.

It took me more than two hours to reach the summit. At that moment, drinking in the marvellous scenery, with undulating mountain ranges all around, I firmly believed that I would succeed in completing my project to walk to Chengdu.

On September 15, I came to a Sichuan road workers' camp at the foot of Mount Xoila. The workers entertained me with steamed buns and canned food. As all I had had to eat for the past few days was *zanba*, I gorged myself unashamedly before falling into a sound sleep.

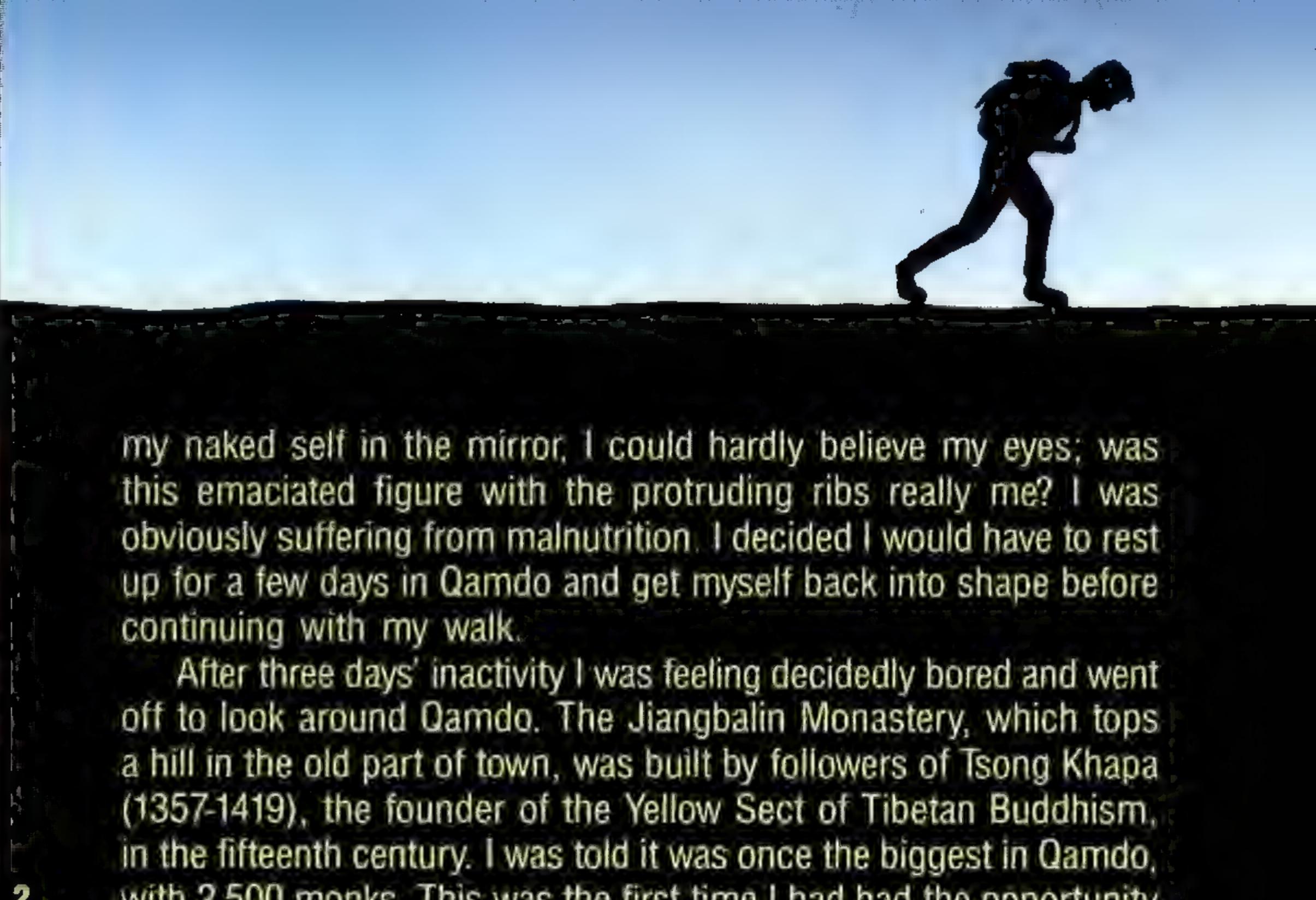
Before me lay the Xoila Pass, covered with snow and ice, at around 4,900 metres the highest point of the whole journey. It took me two and a half hours to get to the top of the pass. Looking down I watched the herds of yaks grazing in the bright sunshine — a scene full of life.

Qamdo and Three Days' Rest

After walking for thirty-two days and covering 1,100 kilometres I relented, took a bus and arrived in Qamdo on September 21. Qamdo, Tibet's third largest city, intersects with the Sichuan-Tibet Highway. It is around 3,200 metres above sea-level.

I had not had a bath for a month. After settling in at the Qamdo Hotel, that was my first priority. It proved to be a shock. Examining





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my naked self in the mirror, I could hardly believe my eyes: was this emaciated figure with the protruding ribs really me? I was obviously suffering from malnutrition. I decided I would have to rest up for a few days in Qamdo and get myself back into shape before continuing with my walk.

After three days' inactivity I was feeling decidedly bored and went off to look around Qamdo. The Jiangbalin Monastery, which tops a hill in the old part of town, was built by followers of Tsong Khapa (1357-1419), the founder of the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, in the fifteenth century. I was told it was once the biggest in Qamdo, with 2,500 monks. This was the first time I had had the opportunity to watch lamas holding a scriptural debate — an unforgettable and fascinating sight.

I took to the road again on September 25, the day of the Mid-Autumn Festival. This was rather a poor choice of date on my part as the thought of the traditional Chinese family festival made me homesick and miserable. Although I was now used to travelling completely alone, nostalgia flooded me.

Three days later, as I was scaling Damala Pass at 4,350 metres in mist and cloud, I realized that I was again totally exhausted — all my physical resources seemed to have deserted me.

Reaching a place called Toba at noon, I went to a Tibetan family's tent. Seeing me coming, the herdsman's wife immediately lit a fire and prepared a meal. I ate ravenously. My hosts looked at me benignly as though to say: 'Eat your fill. We have plenty!'

Twenty kilometres further on I twisted my ankle badly. Luckily a passing driver gave me a lift as far as Dêgê, just over the border in Sichuan Province. The border at this point is formed by the River Jinsha, the upper reaches of the Yangtse.

My Plans Cancelled

After two days' rest in Dêgê, famous as the home of one of the largest Tibetan Buddhist printing houses, I felt much better. I dropped the idea I had been toying with of taking a bus the rest of the way to Chengdu and decided to continue on foot, which meant I had to climb the second highest pass on the route, the Chola Pass, at 4,600 metres above sea-level.

Following instructions I was given by road workers in the area, I took a shortcut along the line of the electricity poles and successfully crossed the Chola Pass before descending to Maniganggo at 4,090 metres. But after this exertion I was totally wiped out, and had to lie down in an inn run by the transport station at Maniganggo, my face as white as a sheet. Fortunately I was sharing a room with a doctor from a clinic in town. He diagnosed me as very weak and told me to go at once to the hospital in Kangding, centre of the Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, for a complete check-up.

I took his advice. On October 6, the doctor in Kangding told me that I was suffering from pulmonary oedema and extreme malnutrition. He warned me that I must take a thorough rest, as otherwise my life would be in danger. Under the circumstances I had no option but to give up all my hopes of continuing with my walk.

On October 9, I covered the remaining 370 kilometres to Chengdu by bus, emerging into the bustling city crowds with a sense of unreality and still smelling of yak butter.



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Common sights — youths off on a pilgrimage to Lhasa (1), and hitching a lift on the Qinghai-Tibet Highway (4). The new generation of monks at Sogxian's Zandan Lamasery (2); renovations in progress at Jiangbalin Monastery in Qamdo (3).

BALING



BRIDGE

PHOTOS BY ZHU YANMING

TEXT BY CHANG HUAMING

Mount Niaoshu in Weiyuan County, southern Gansu, is the source of the River Weihe, a major tributary of the Huanghe (Yellow River). Not long after the founding of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), fighting in the area was still fierce between the Ming troops and the remainders of the defeated forces of the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). According to legend, the Ming general Xu Da pursued the Yuan general Timur into the mountain. After crossing a bridge over the swollen Weihe, Timur took the precaution of destroying the bridge so that Xu Da was brought up short on the opposite riverbank.

Xu Da camped beside the river while he tried to decide what to do next. On his third night there the goddess of the Weihe appeared to him in a dream, claiming to be a former concubine of the Western Han emperor Wudi (who reigned between 141 and 87 B.C.). The goddess said she had been ordered by an even earlier emperor (whom she called Baling) to help him cross the river. Accordingly, in the morning, Xu Da followed her instructions to the letter, using perforated wooden boxes filled with stones to make a river crossing. He named the rudimentary bridge Baling because of a phrase used by the goddess.

Today a graceful wooden bridge spans a tributary of the Weihe, the Qingyuan, south of Weiyuan. The earliest bridge here is said to have been a flat type constructed between 1368

and 1398 and washed away by floods on several occasions. The present bridge was built in 1919 and renovated in 1934, followed by large-scale renovation in the mid-1980s.

It is around forty metres long and five metres wide, and it rises high above the river in a magnificent single 'rainbow' arch. The bridge is approached through a brick porch with upturned eaves adorned with animal heads and with crossbeams and rafters colourfully decorated in the traditional manner. Its body consists of three walkways, with wide steps in the centre and a narrower set on either side. The sixty-four wooden pillars along its length divide it neatly into thirteen sections. Apparently, the 1919 version was modelled on a bridge – itself renovated many times over the centuries – which straddled the River Leitan on Mount Xinglong near Yuzhong, further north from Weiyuan.

I was told that this Baling Bridge is located at a spot which has been an important crossing point since the Yuan dynasty. A new flat cement bridge has been built about one hundred metres away for vehicular traffic, and there is a park at the southern end of Baling Bridge which makes a pleasant place to sit and watch passers-by, the bridge and the river itself... and maybe dream up another river goddess!



Translated by He Fei



A Bowl of Tea Amid Melodies

PHOTOS BY LAN PO TEXT BY JIANG ZHINAN





Photo by Lam Kin Fai



Photo by Lam Kin Fai



One of the most famous novelists and playwrights of modern China was Lao She, the pen-name of Shu Qingchun (1899-1966), born into a Manchu family of Beijing. Lao She's works are permeated with the ambience of old Beijing, its customs and its people.

The best-known of his novels is undoubtedly *Camel Xiangzi* (also translated as *Rickshaw Boy*), while the most popular play must be *Teahouse*. The teahouse of the title forms the background for the action of the play, which

traces the events of the reform movement of the late Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the warlord period in the early stages of the Republic (1912-1949) and the War Against Japanese Aggression (1937-1945). The play satirizes the evils of those turbulent times and is still very popular today. So popular in fact that it has inspired the construction of a new Beijing teahouse, aptly named the 'Lao She Teahouse' in honour of both play and playwright.

If you visit the teahouse, which is located in the Qianmen District in southern Beijing, you will find refreshments and delicacies provided in addition to a wide variety of teas from all over China.

I went there to experience the atmosphere. To my surprise, the place was rather full already. It contained some thirty to forty tables, all set in the time-honoured manner. The furnishings were reproductions of antiques, the walls were hung with classical Chinese paintings and calligraphy.... Prominent in the teahouse was the small stage on which, all day long, entertainers take turn and turn about in the traditional fashion of Chinese teahouses.

After a while, a waitress in a red *qipao* came over to take my order: Yuqian Longjing tea and a few local cakes. As I sat there, I started to realize that the crowd signified that we were about to be treated to a performance by Beijing artistes with a large local following.

First to appear on stage was a woman who clamped a candle stand firmly between her teeth ... and then proceeded to sing! In fact, she sang beautifully. What surprised me most was that the candles continued to burn without flickering throughout her song, proving her marvellous breath control.

The audience was even more appreciative of the next act. This Beijing Opera performer had obviously reached a high level of expertise. Some of the guests, bewitched by the tones she was producing, hummed along to the melody, others tapped out the rhythm with their feet.

The last and — to my mind — the best performance was given by a sprightly pair of gentlemen aged sixty-plus and ninety. This was a comic sequence between master and disciple. Their ingenious dialogue, quick repartee and amusing antics soon had the audience in fits of laughter. 

Translated by Xu Li Qing



'Erotic' Carvings on Mound



Wings of Mount Qingcheng

PHOTOS BY CHAN YAT NIN

TEXT BY CHUAN KE



Mai Shuhuan

Mount Qingcheng in Sichuan, located some sixty-five kilometres west of Chengdu, the provincial capital, is a renowned beauty spot, green, yet interspersed with jagged ravines. It is also reputed to be the birthplace of Taoism.

During the later years of the Eastern Han dynasty, a man named Zhang Ling (34-156) built a thatched hut on the mountain slopes and settled here to teach Taoist principles. This former official is said to have turned from the corrupt government and devoted himself to the search for the 'elixir of life'. Known to later generations as Tianshi (Heavenly Master), he is considered the founder of that side of Taoism which places emphasis on magic and talismans. His great age is accounted for by his having become a young man again at the age of sixty.

The mountain became the site of over seventy halls and temples. The oldest ones date from the Jin dynasty (265-420). The so-called Tianshi Cave Temple, which has the greatest number of halls, was built initially between 605 and 618 in the Sui dynasty and had already grown to considerable size by Tang times. However the present buildings, set at over 1,000 metres above sea-level, date from the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

It is true that Sichuan is famous for its vivid stone carvings, but there can be few like the

small examples you can see, topping the balusters outside Sanqing Hall at the Tianshi Cave Temple. What are we to make of what appear to be mischievous small boys, but who are undoubtedly indulging in erotic games?

There was a school of Taoism which was linked with mystic sexual practices and, according to at least one later Taoist, originated with Zhang Ling himself. One of the aims of the Taoist adept was to conserve all his spirit or essence within himself, not allowing it to be dissipated, with the aim of healing or preventing illness and of prolonging life. The idea was that nourishing the 'vital principle' would eventually lead to immortality. This led to the elaboration of a code of practice governing sexual intercourse between men and women because of the concomitant necessity to unite the yang (the male principle) and the yin (the female principle). The idea of celibacy propagated by Buddhism was not adopted by Taoist adepts until at least the Tang dynasty, and then only partially.

This still doesn't explain these boys. One local version offered is that, between 713 and 741, a power struggle broke out here between Taoism

and Buddhism. The Buddhists seized the Tianshi Cave Temple; the Taoists appealed for retribution as high as the emperor himself, who ordered the temple to be returned to them. The victorious Taoists are therefore said to have had these figurines carved to mock the celibate Buddhists (or possibly to accuse them of hidden immoral practices?). At any rate, it is unlikely that anyone can now unravel the true story behind these rare carvings.

Translated by Xu Li Qing



Mai Shuhuan



Grand Photo Contest Results

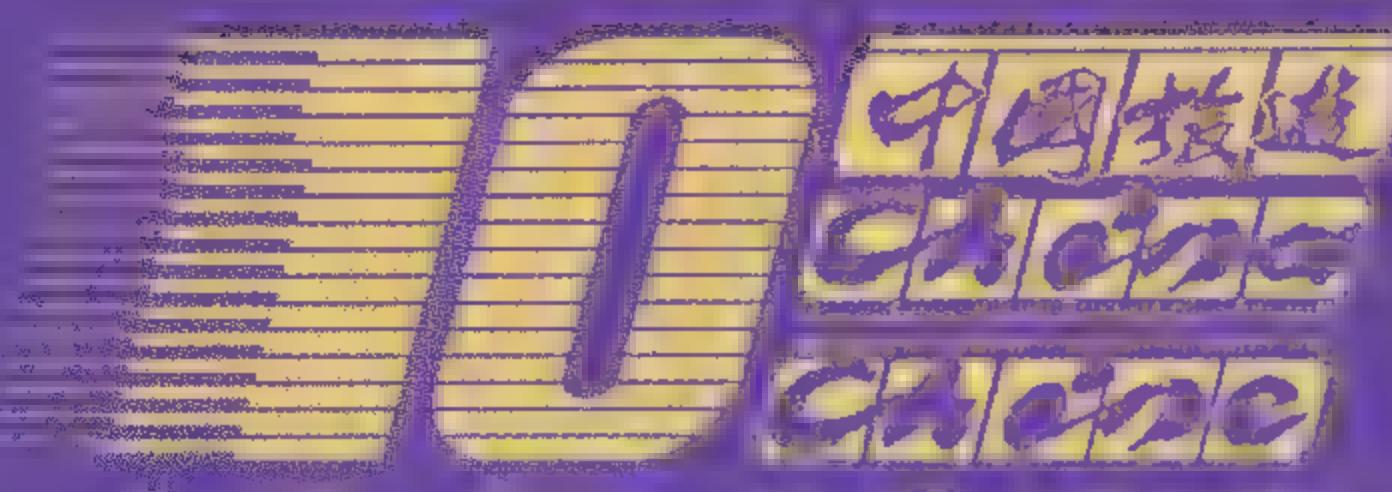
We are pleased to report that the Grand Photo Contest organized in honour of our tenth anniversary of publication enjoyed a wildly enthusiastic response. We received no less than 10,000 works by over 2,000 photographers from more than a dozen countries and regions.

Seventeen winning entries — one Grand Prize, and eight prizes in each of the two categories (colour prints and colour slides) — have now been selected by our panel of judges. The latter included esteemed photographers such as (in alphabetical order) Manly Chin, Kan Hing Fook, Alfred Ko, Tchan Fou-li, Claude Tsang Ka Kit, Wang Miao and Sydney C.K. Wong.

The winner of the Grand Prize and the first, second and third prize-winners in both categories received Canon cameras sponsored by Jardine Photo Systems. All seventeen prize-winners won a trip to China, plus a trophy, as well as free subscriptions of varying lengths to CHINA TOURISM.

The winning photos as well as selected entries will be exhibited at the Museum of Chinese Historical Relics in Wanchai, Hong Kong, during the second half of October this year. Edward Keller (HK) Ltd. is kindly sponsoring the ILFORD COLORLUXE super gloss colour negative paper used, Color Six Laboratories Ltd. the enlargement and framing of exhibits.

Below is a complete list of the prize-winners and selected entries (where not specified, entrants/winners are from China, Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan). We are delighted to show you here the top seven photos: winners of the Grand Prize and the top three prizes in each category. Hearty congratulations to all!



Grand Prize



Smoke from Morning Cooking Fires (Litang, western Sichuan): Liu Xiaojun

Colour Print Category



FIRST PRIZE

Camel Herd in a Mountain Valley (Gansu): Lei Liming



SECOND PRIZE

Bathing (Zhongdian, northwestern Yunnan): Luo Jinhui

SELECTED ENTRIES

Colour Print Category

The Great Wall in Luoping County: Yamaguchi Naoki (Japan)

'Special Seat': Wu Xuehua

'Who Is Higher?': Shen Guangzhi

The Bund: Hu Ming

Taipingzhai Great Wall: Yuan Xuanmin

Ushering in the Spring: Gao Lujia

The Bird-Lover: Gao Lujia

The Pottery Maker: Liu Xinsheng

Fertile Land: Li Yingjie

Dwelling in a Snowy Land: Song Hongyan

Oroqen Hunter: Wang Xiao

Village Night After Snow: Xu Xuezhe

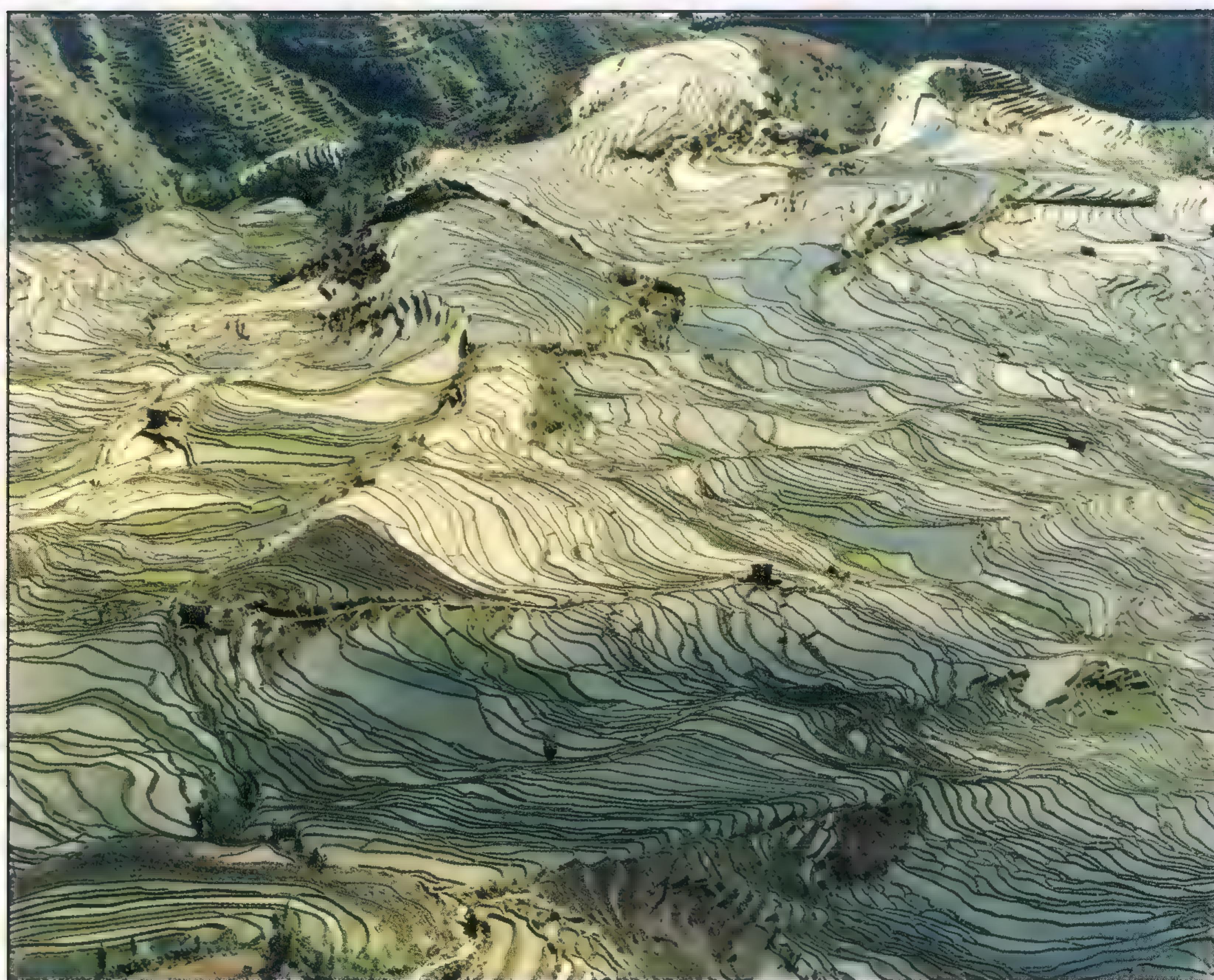
Sun-Bathed Birch Grove: Hu Xiaoping

Sunset at River Nengjiang: Li Yonghan

An Oroqen Settlement of Today: Yang Yongsheng

Evening Glow: Tsang Hin-Ting

Festival in a Yao Village: Tan Zeqiu



THIRD PRIZE

Terraced Fields (Yunnan): Zhang Shirong

SPECIAL PRIZE

Beside Lake Erhai (Dali, western Yunnan): Liao Ning
Bright Colours on the Mountain (Yimeng area, central Shandong): Li Zhaojun
Having a Conversation (Shantou, Guangdong): Weng Zhixiong
Door Gods in a Li Village (Sanya, Hainan): Lin Yongle
Sharing the Fun (Xishuangbanna, Yunnan): Wang Yizhong

Old and New — 100-Year-Old Oyster Shell Wall: Jan Engsberg
New Angle on the Bell Tower: Lam Kiu Min
Festival Night: Yip Koon Kwan
Salt Harvesting: Chen Yangkun
Hui'an Women: Wu Qikui
Cooking a Meal: Tan Dayuan
Continuity of Tradition: Li Jiejun
Life in a Zhuang Village: Chen Yajiang
Early Morning at Silishan: Tan Keng Seng (Singapore)

A Sign of a Bumper Harvest: Tan Keng Seng (Singapore)
Childhood: Liu Fuju
Children in a Hamlet: Li Zhaojun
Offering Sacrifices to the Sea: Wang Zengyi
Pilgrimage to Mount Taishan: Zhai Jian
Sturdy Pines on Mount Taishan: Wang Changmin
Sisters in a Dong Village: Song Yingchun
'Attention...!': Marga van Langen (Holland)
Another Gratifying Year: Zhang Jiurong

Colour Slide Category



FIRST PRIZE

Country Folk (Yutian/Keriya, southern Xinjiang): Sun Jiabin

Children of Boat-Dwellers: Chen Yuchao
Heading for Market: Zheng Jie
Uygur Boy: Xu Fu
Girls of the Plateau: Liu Zongfang
Pious Worshippers: Ren Jing
A Settlement Under Snow at Dawn: Lei Pak Tong
Native Land: Sun Jianzhong
The Age-Old Cradle: Xie Zhengzhi
Night Gathering in a Yao Village: Chen Zhangyun

Celebrating the Farmer's Happy Life: Gao Mingxin
Bathing: Wang Yajun
The Torch Festival: Chen Fu
Before the Horse Race: Li Dan
Siguniang Mountains: Yuan Xuejun
Snow-Capped Mountains on an Autumn Evening: Cheung Ping Sum
A Kangba Father: Huang Chunhui
'Little Master': Ling Dengyi
A Sea of Clouds: Xu Guanghua



SECOND PRIZE

The Torch Festival (Jinyang, Liangshan Mountains, Sichuan): Yuan Dehong

Snow's My Country: Kong A. Siou Max (New Caledonia)
Korean Dance: Xin Fang
Soaring: Chen Fu
The Snow-Covered Changbai Mountains: Mou Shanyu
A Boundless Path: Cen Zhili
The Dragon on Earth: Luo Wanbao
Dance: Heng-Sun Kok
Evening Melody: Huang Kui Mei
Wedding Photo: Siu Yau Chung
Waist-Drum Dance: Law Yiu Chuen

Visiting the Ancient Pagoda: Wang Yi
The Echo: Li Zhongchen
Worshipping Heaven: Li Jinhua
A Northern Shaanxi Boy: Zhang Jiurong
A Kids' World: Feng Xiaowei
Married Off to a Faraway Village: Bing Junguang
Winter Melody: Yu Deshui
Spring Snow: Wang Yong
Snowy Day North of the Great Wall: Zhao Qing
Northern Shaanxi Dwelling at Night: Wang Qiuhang



THIRD PRIZE

Riders in the Highlands (Tibet): Yang Xiaoli

SPECIAL PRIZE

Devout Believers (Tibet): Cheng Weidong

Taking a Rest (Baotou, Inner Mongolia): Li Enzhong

Crowded Street (Jiangxi): Guo Jiasheng

The Call (Hongyuan, Sichuan): Wang Fudi

Lamas (Lhasa, Tibet): Liu Xiaojun

Winter in Northern China: Wu Chenwen
Village Opera: Hu Linqing
A Brocade Market in a Mountain Village: Wang Yong
Yangko Dance: Wang Yong
During the Spring Festival: Huang Chunhui
The 'Survivors': Jia Guorong
The 'Nine-Bend' Maze: Liu Xiaojun
Spring Snow in the Desert: Du Yulin
Grassland at Dawn: Wang Yong
Evening on the Grassland: Liu Changsuo

Trekking in the Vast Desert: Harsbagen
On the Bank of Swan Lake: Harsbagen
'Tiger' Wrestler at Rest: Cheng Minggui
Miao Women: Wan Chi Lung
Little Model: Lin Yongle
'Close to Heaven' — Buddhist Pilgrims: Cai Wuchun
Local Marriage Rite: Hu Xiaoming
Local Opera in a Waterside Village: Pan Honghai
Boats: Ying Min
Song of Autumn: Xie Li

Little Companions: Zheng Guoqiang
Impression of a Small Town: Ren Qijun
A Potential Sailor: Tang Yonggang
Singing to Her Heart's Content: Yang Bixia
A Long-Cherished Wish Has Come True: Huang Yong
Waterside Village in April: Wu Dongshuang
A Crane and Swan Paradise: You Yungu
Plateau • Life: Wang Qiuhan
The Snow-Attired Loess Land: Wang Qiuhan
Holy Water: Wu Peixiong
Preparing to Expose the Giant Buddha: Zhao Ping
Returning from Herding: Chang Ken
'Who's Looking at Who?': Sun Jianzhong
Climbing the Dune: Tong Zhongsheng
Crescent Moon Spring: Xue Jia
Young Monks: Jin Huang
Between Heaven and Earth: Liu Bingyuan
Harvest: Ding Hongpu
Two Generations: Tian Xianguang
After Snow: Chen Zhitao
Sparing No Effort: Zhao Shipeng
'Three in One': Li Jun
Call to Prayer with a Sip of Coca-Cola: Christoph Baumer (Switzerland)
Praying for Good Fortune: Danba Jianshen
A Shy Tibetan Girl: Zhao Ping
Autumn Scene on the Grassland: Che Gang
The Golden Potala Palace: Wang Wenbo
Sparing Has Come to the Pastureland: Yuan Xuejun
Entrance to the Sacred Halls: Liu Nan
Younger and Older Generations: Liu Xiaoju
Buddhist Pilgrims: Liu Xiaoju
Red Wall: Wu Yun'an
Young Nuns: Li Xiaoning
The Snow Lingers on Mount Huangshan: Kong Fangui
An Encounter: Wu Jian
Heavy Dowry: Xie Yingdi
Enduring the Hardships of a Journey: Ding Hongpu
Yearning for Home: Xing Yi
Childhood: Wang Yizhong
Morning: Wang Yizhong
Starting Work at Daybreak: Yuan Xuejun
Dai Girls: Gong Jianhua
Bird-Watching: Xing Yi
Flying Under a Red Umbrella: Zhao Danbo
'Sea': Shen Shaoxiong
A Va Village: Wu Jialin
Intimacy: Chen Anding
Highway on the Plateau: Wu Jialin
Young Buddhist Monks: Qi Hequan
Lively Movements: Chan Ping Hung
Happy Time: Lam Shue Wa
Devoted Prayers: Lam Shue Wa
Dance to Usher in a Bountiful Year: Chan Shu Yan
Before Dawn: Yeung Ming

Colour Slide Category

'Ships of the Desert': Chu Xiaoqing
Going to the Fair: Li Jiang
Lake Sayram in Spring: Zhao Jun'an
Hotan Man: Sun Jiabin
Uygur Woman: Sun Jiabin
On the Road to the Tianshan Mountains: Hou Jian
The Road to Lake Manas: Chen Jin
Camel Train in the Tengger Desert: Shi Guanda
Earth Forest: Yuan Xuejun
Drying Bamboo Shoots: Wu Jialin
Door: Wu Jialin
'Here Come Our Visitors!': Pan Rong
The Reviving Land: Duan Xinmin
Home in the Depths of the Highlands: Yuan Xuejun
Morning on Lake Erhai: Yuan Xuejun

Hurrying Home: Shen Che
Autumn in Dêqên: Ou Yansheng
Praying: Er Dongqiang
Tenderness: Er Dongqiang
Spring on the Plateau: Zhao Zhenya
Flowers and Youngsters: Ma Li
'Ships of the Desert': Tan Ming
Silvery Snake — The Great Wall: Fu Yamin
Moon Over the Native Land: Yuan Dongping
The Seventeen-Arched Bridge on a Moonlit Night: Yao Tianxin
Huanghe Nine-Bend Maze: Yang Zuohuan
City Wall: Chen Jianbang
Temple Fair: Wang Wenbo
Scene of Mount Luoji: Wang Xicheng
Winter Moon on the Plateau: Wang Jianjun
A Yi Horseman: Chen Fu
Jinding at Daybreak: Wang Jianjun
Landscape: Yu Yuntian
Pastoral Scene: Liu Xiaoju
Lake Yaochi: Yu Yuntian
Grand Gathering: Zhong Dakun
Fashion Parade: Zhang Ping
Lake Reflection: Wen Shaojun
Guilin Peaks: Meng Zi
Mending Fishing Nets: Wang Gang Feng (Canada)
Offering Sacrifices to Mazu: Lin Xiao Yu (Canada)
Special Audience: Jing Hong-wei (U.S.A.)
Going Home: Wang Gang Feng (Canada)
Greeting with a Smile: Jing Hong-wei (U.S.A.)
Miao Festive Gathering: Zhu Tianhua
Beauty Lovers (Miao): Liu Lang
Sunset at a Waterside Village: Jin Qinchun
Festival Parade: Cheng Weidong
Village Opera: Yang Zuohuan
Before the Performance: Cheng Weidong
Collecting Ice: Xu Xuezhe
Daybreak: Cheng Weidong
Martial Arts Practice Ground: Guo Jianshe
Golden Autumn at Jiaozhuo: Guo Jianshe
Confucian Study Tour: Cai Xingmin
Harvest Season: Chen Fu
Affection: Cen Jiabao
Morning Snow on the West Peak: Wang Yong
Suona Players: Li Enzhong
A Gathering of the 'Immortals': Shi Baoxiu
National Music Troupe: Hou Dengke
Meeting a Stranger: Hou Dengke
A Busy City: Lai Yiu Chuen
The Melody of Nature: Du Guang
Evening Pastoral: Xiang Xuhua
Catching a Horse: Bai Junjiang
Herding: Yang Yaxi
Evening Glow on the Grassland: Yin Dingzhong
Mount Huangshan Wreathed in Clouds: Kang Lirong
Clouds at Xihai (Mount Huangshan): Yuan Lianmin
Waves of Clouds (Mount Huangshan): Jia Guorong
The Narrows of Life: Chen Shizhe
Mount Huangshan After Snow: Lu Kaidi
Hide-and-Seek: Ren Chenming
Nam Co — The Heavenly Lake: Che Gang
Pilgrimage: Bruno Baumann (W. Germany)
Setting Sail in the Mist: Yu Ruofei
Song of the Nets: Ren Jing
Making Soybean Skins: Zhang Wenhui
Spring Water: Shao Jiaye
Waltz of the Earth: Wu Dongshuang
Morning on the Island: Wu Dongshuang
The Mingsha Dunes: Chu Xiaoqing
Stampede: Lei Liming
Barbecued Fish: Imin Gaiti
The Hexi Corridor: Chu Xiaoqing



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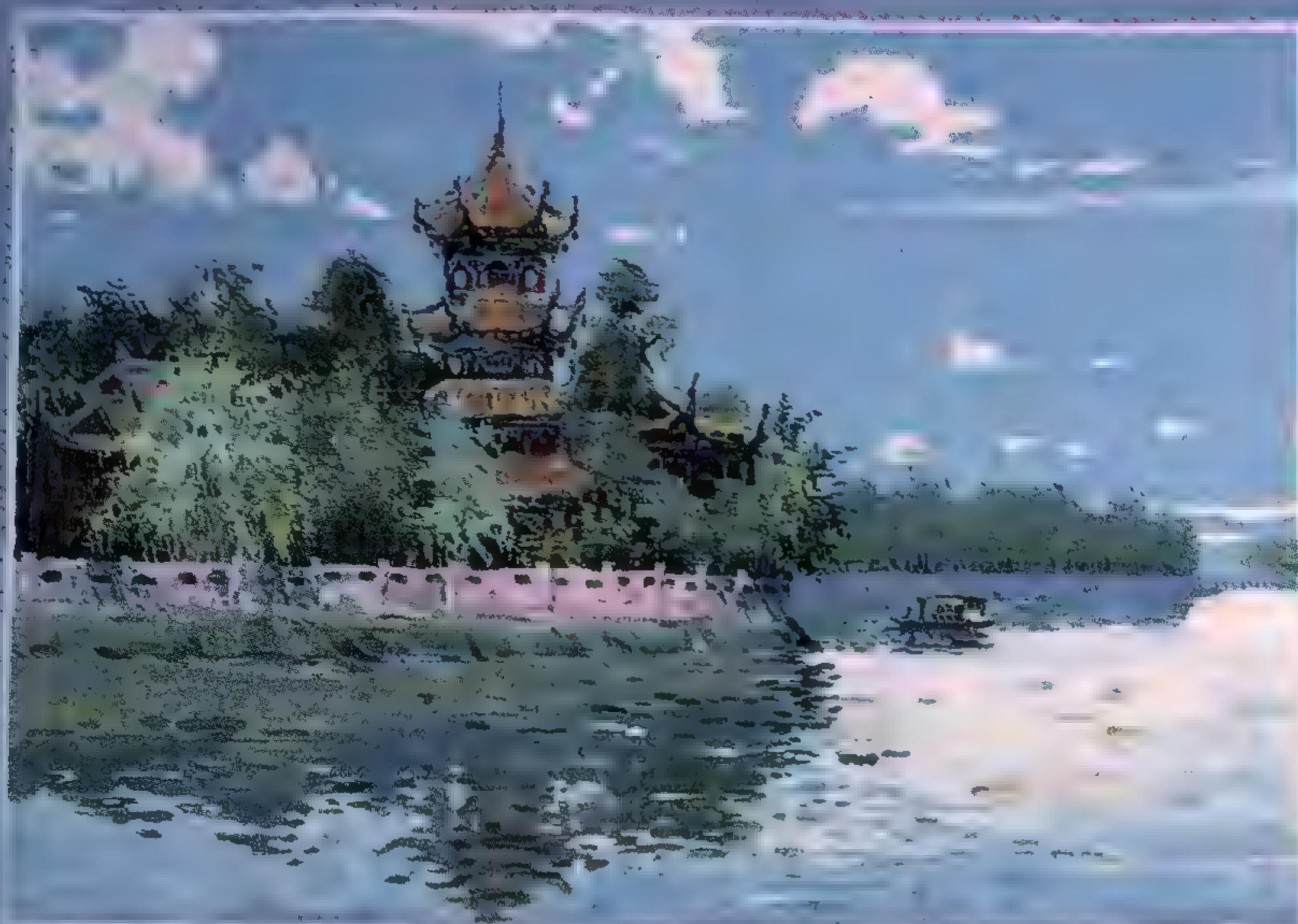
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Sichuan carpets are characterized by their rich array of designs. Not only available are the traditional Beijing style, artistic style, floral patterns, landscape patterns, patterns of Dunhuang painting, and Persian style, but also the newly designed patterns which are unique in their artistic styles and oriental taste.

Sichuan is noted for its long history in the production of silk carpets. Formerly exported by Shanghai under the brand name of "Pine and Crane", Sichuan silk carpets are now directly exported by SICHUAN ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS IMP. & EXP. CORP.

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The Embroidery of Southern

The charming articles we see here are the result of the amalgamation of two local arts and crafts of southern Shanxi Province. The babies' bibs, breast-cloths and jackets, the aprons, cushion covers, special birthday sheets and so on are embroidered with themes taken from Pu opera.

The oldest of the four main *bangzi* (regional operas) of Shanxi, Pu opera is also popular in the neighbouring provinces of Shaanxi, Henan, Gansu and parts of Qinghai. It originated in Puzhou (present-day Yongji), hence its name.

Following the traditions passed on from generation to generation, the women of southern Shanxi love to reproduce their favourite stories, their heroes and heroines, from Pu opera, on all sorts of domestic items. Their work is usually executed on a background of silk, satin or cotton fabric using a variety of stitches in bright yet harmonious, auspicious colours.

C

Translated by M.T.



Photo by Chan Yat Nin

Shanxi

PHOTOS BY LIU ANXIN
TEXT BY CHAN YAT NIN



Photo by Chan Yat Nin

PHOTOS BY CHUNG KIN MAN
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY LI WO TAK

Chung Kin Man is one of Hong Kong's best-known mountaineers and the founder of the Hong Kong Mountaineering Training Centre, which he currently manages.

According to Chung, some of the interest for him in climbing mountains all over the world is that: 'I can see the land and its people as well as toughen myself, sharpen my wits and learn to be more independent.' His ambition is to conquer the highest peak on every continent.

Chung Kin Man started to develop an interest in climbing and in exploring the countryside of Hong Kong at a very early age. In 1972 he learned the basics of rock-climbing and practised them whenever he had the opportunity. As the sport of mountaineering originated in Europe, Chung first set his sights on that continent's mountains. He went to Belgium in 1977 and worked part-time while studying graphic design. During his holidays he travelled and climbed mountains, managing to visit almost all the countries of Europe in the process.

In his seventeen years of mountaineering, his conquests have included France's Mont Blanc which, at 4,807 metres, is the highest mountain in Europe; Alaska's 6,194-metre-high Mount McKinley, highest in North America; Tanzania's 5,895-metre Mount Kilimanjaro, highest in Africa; and Chile's 6,800-metre Mount Tupungato, one of the highest in South America (the highest being the 6,960-metre Acancagua).

In China, Chung Kin Man has attempted, so far unsuccessfully, to scale the 7,546-metre Muztagata in the Pamirs in western Xinjiang, close to the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Mount Gongga, the highest mountain in Sichuan Province, 7,556 metres above sea-level (see CHINA TOURISM no. 67). In the Himalayan Mountains he has tried the 8,012-metre-high Xixabangma (Gosainthan) close to the Sino-Nepalese border, which is ranked fourteenth among the world's peaks (see CHINA TOURISM no. 100). His most recent expedition in China in July 1989 was an ambitious attempt on the 7,553-metre Zhangzi Peak on the north face of Qomolangma (Everest) in Tibet. This was a joint Sino-Hong Kong expedition led by Chung, and it proved successful although he himself did not take part in the final ascent.

Why has he devoted so much of his life to mountain expeditions? He scratches his head: 'I don't quite know. But coming into contact with different peoples and customs is a new experience every time. So the more I climb, the greater the interest I develop.'

In 1983 he came across the Uygurs on his Muztagata expedition; this was the first time he had encountered a Caucasian minority people in China. They lived in simple mud huts but

dressed in colourful clothes and looked so much more exotic than the residents of an average Chinese city. 'I think the region had not been open to the outside world all that long at that time. We were as curious about them as they were about us, and we all ended up standing staring at each other. It was rather amusing!'

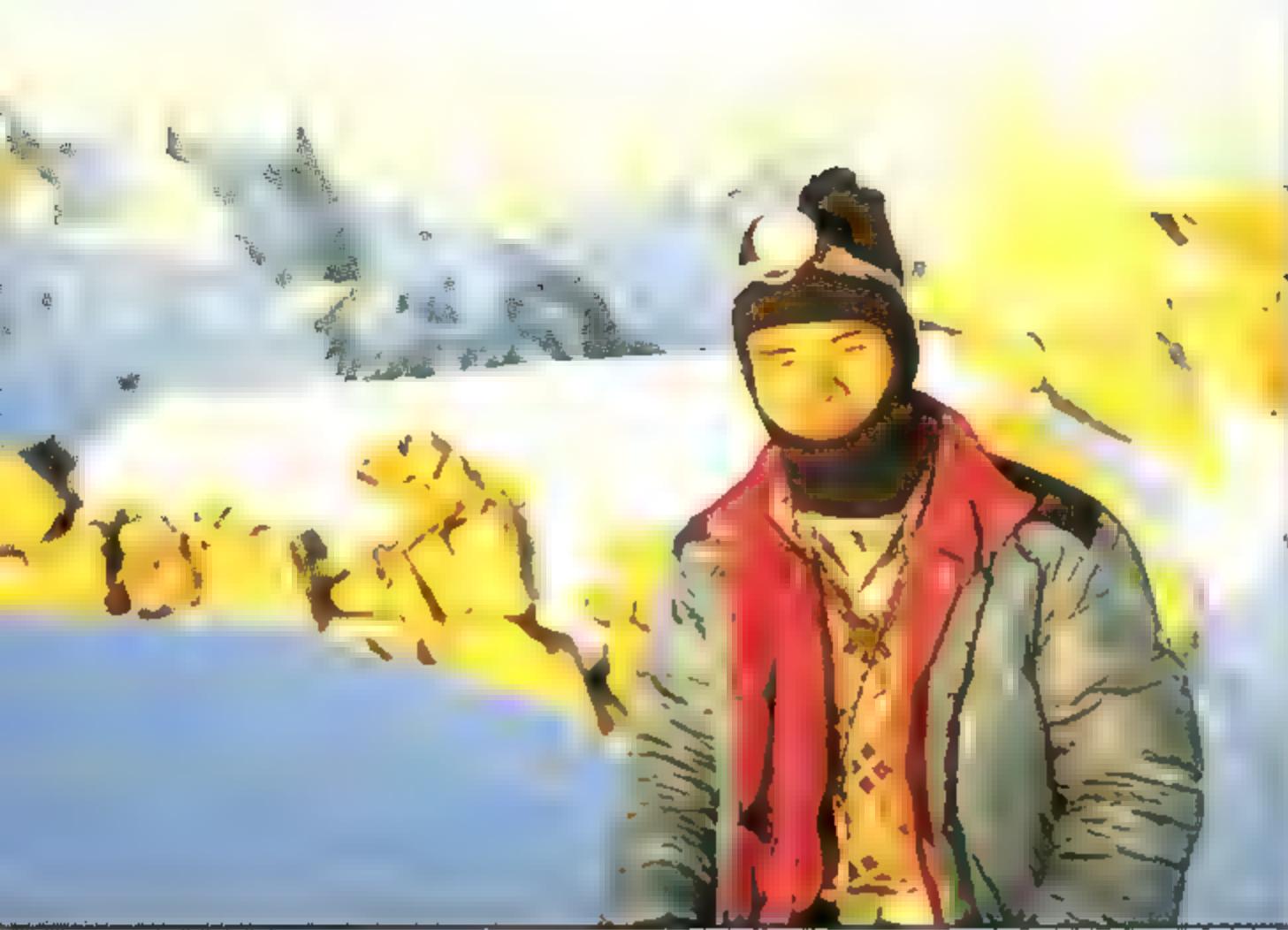
In 1987, while preparing for the Xixabangma expedition, he visited many Tibetan homes looking for yaks capable of carrying heavy loads for the team. The outside of the houses or tents were painted with striking designs, often religious in significance. The walls were liberally smeared with the cowdung which the Tibetans dried for fuel. In the end, he did manage to find several yaks, but their owners did not tie them up properly. The following day they were nowhere to be seen and the team was hopping mad. They had to track the yaks deep into the mountains to recover them.

Having climbed both the highest and the most famous of Sichuan's mountains – the 7,566-metre Gongga and the 3,099-metre Emei – Chung states that: 'As far as climate is concerned, Emei has comparatively mild changes. Besides, there are people going up and down the mountain all the time and there are shelters and guesthouses everywhere. But Gongga is a very different prospect. At that great height the weather is unpredictable. You can easily get altitude sickness and there's not a soul around to provide assistance. You have to camp in the snow at night. If you haven't brought enough warm clothes or food supplies, you can easily freeze or starve to death.'

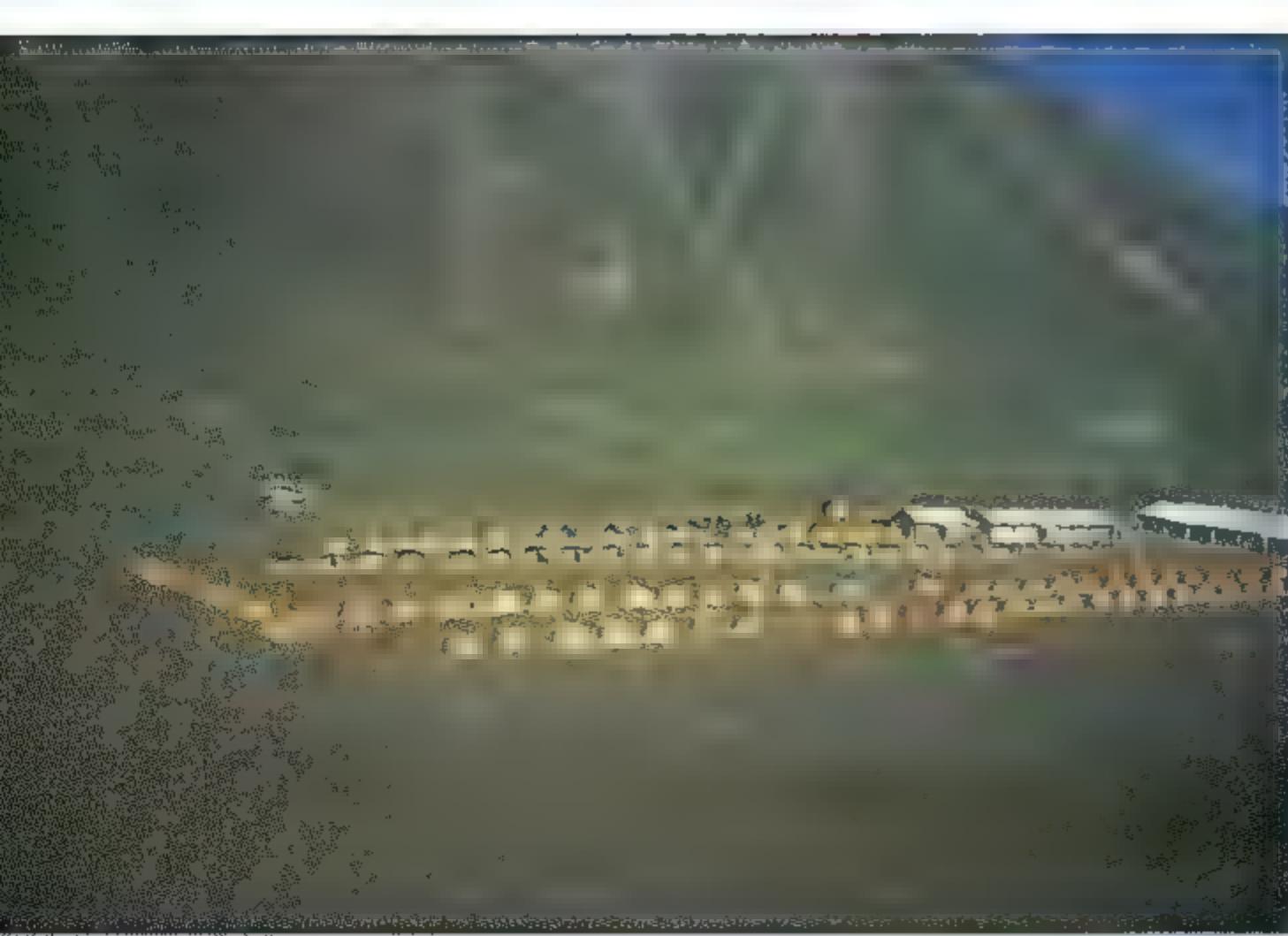
After all the giants he has climbed, Mount Emei must have been an easy climb? Not really. He found he was breathing hard and got tired but, since he was used to high altitudes, at least he suffered none of the headaches which some of those around him experienced. When he reached the summit of Emei and looked over to Gongga, he immediately realized how small was Emei and how vast and magnificent Gongga. However, he recalls: 'High up on Mount Gongga, at around 7,000 metres, the most you can see is blue sky and white clouds. If there is mist or heavy snow, that is that – zero visibility. Nothing to be compared with the beautiful views you get from Emei.'

Chung Kin Man admits that he is obsessed with mountains and gets the greatest satisfaction out of conquering them and setting his own personal records. There is nothing like going through so many difficulties to achieve success in the end. Reaching the summit is often an emotional moment and Chung and his colleagues have been known to shed tears. However, it is important not to lose one's head at such times so they generally only stay on the summit for half an hour, then hurry down the mountain for fear of a change in the weather and to conserve oxygen.

Aspiring to the Heights



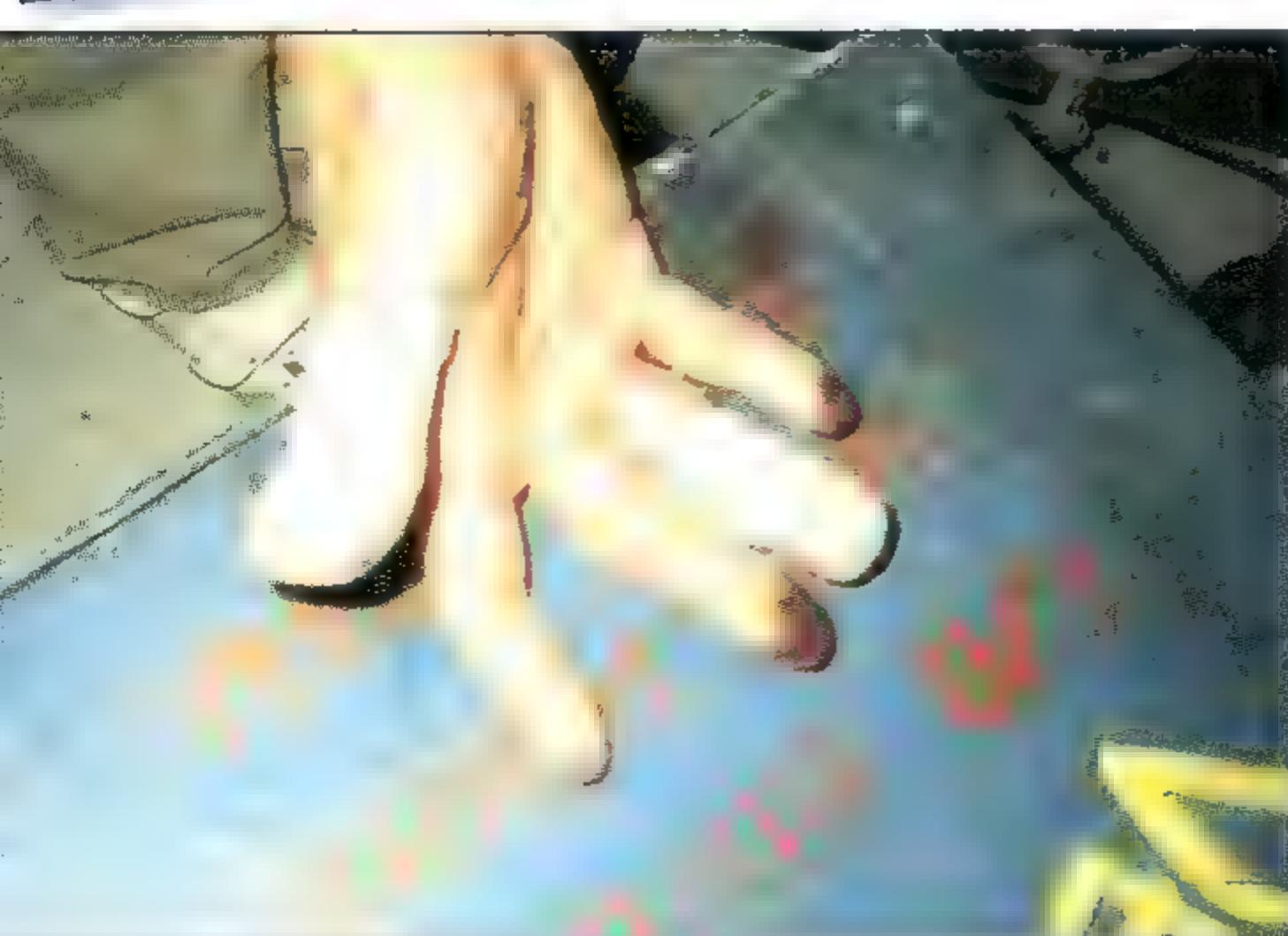
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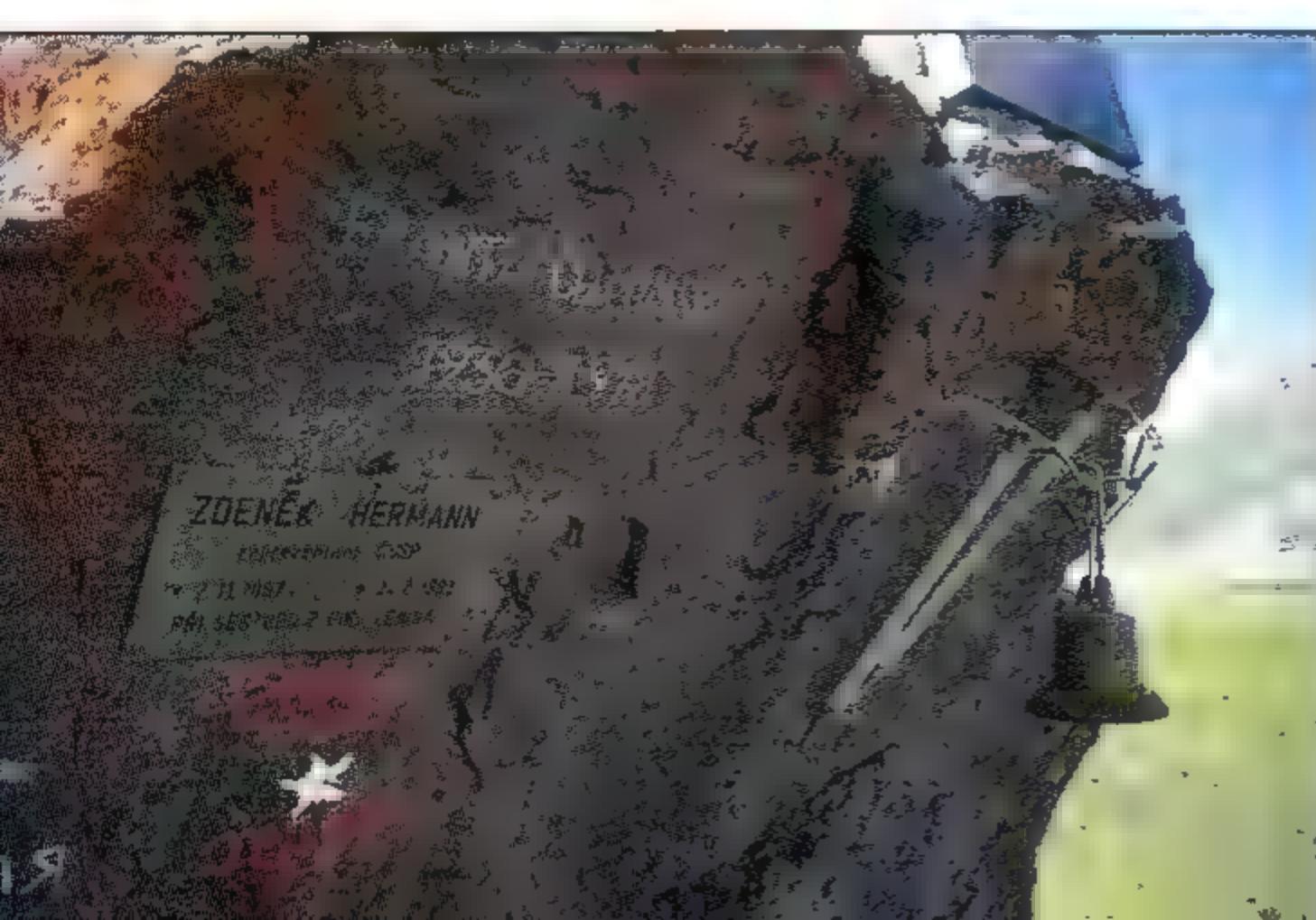
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Lotus Creek

The present short story, set in 1940, was actually written in 1945. Its background is the period of the Japanese occupation. China's northeastern provinces — Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning — were invaded in 1931, after which Japanese forces progressively occupied all the provinces east and north of the Huanghe (Yellow River), the Yangtse Valley up as far as Lake Dongting, and all the major cities east of a line running between Zhengzhou in Henan and Guangzhou in Guangdong. Hebei was inevitably in the thick of operations.

Although the characters presented in this short story are ordinary villagers, they too get caught up in guerrilla activities. Their actions give us something of the atmosphere of the times for people even in this rural backwater, living among the reedbeds of Hebei's Lake Baiyangdian — neatly dovetailing in with this month's special theme.

The writer Sun Li was born in Hebei in 1913 and grew up in the countryside there. After leaving school he moved to Beijing and became a clerk. During the war against Japan he worked as a correspondent, editor and teacher in the Fuping Mountains in Hebei; he began his literary career in 1939. After 1949 Sun Li worked as an editor for a number of publications. His works include *Stormy Years*, a novel; *The Blacksmith and the Carpenter*, a novelette; and other stories.

It was a summer night in the year 1940. The moon had risen and the little courtyard was delightfully fresh and clean. The rushes split during the day were damp and supple, just waiting to be woven into mats. A woman was sitting in the yard plaiting the long soft rushes with nimble fingers. The thin, fine strands leaped and twisted in her arms.

Baiyangdian lies in the middle of the province of Hebei and is known all over China for its reeds and rushes. I can't tell you the exact area grown with them nor the yearly output. All I know is that each year when the rush flowers blow in the breeze and the leaves turn yellow, the whole crop is cut and stacked in the squares round Baiyangdian like a Great Wall of reeds. The women plait mats in their threshing-fields or courtyards, vast quantities of silvery, snow-white mats. And in June, when the water in the creek is high, countless boats ship them away, until soon towns and villages in all parts of the country have these finely woven mats with their lovely designs.

"Baiyangdian mats are best," is quite an axiom:

The young woman in the yard was plaiting a mat, seated on the long stretch of it already accomplished where she seemed enthroned on virgin snow or on a fleecy cloud. From time to time she strained her eyes towards the creek, another world of silver white. Light, translucent mist had risen over the water, and the breeze was laden with the scent of fresh lotus leaves.

The gate was still open — her husband wasn't home yet.

It was very late before her husband came home. He was twenty-five or twenty-six, a barefoot young fellow in a large straw hat, a spotless white shirt and black trousers rolled up over his knees. His name was Shusheng and he was chief of the anti-Japanese guerrillas in Lesser Reed Village. Today he had taken his men to the district town for a meeting. His wife looked up with a smile as he came in.

"What kept you so long today?"

She stood up to fetch him some food. Shusheng sat on the steps.

"Never mind about that — I've eaten."

She sat down on the mat again. Her husband's face was rather flushed and he seemed out of breath.

"Where are the others?" she asked.

"Still in town. How's Dad?"

"Asleep."

"And Xiaohua?"

"He was out half the day with his grandad shrimp[ing] and went to bed hours ago. Why haven't the others come back?"

Shusheng gave a forced laugh.

"What's wrong with you?"

"I'm joining the army tomorrow," he said softly.

His wife's hand twitched as if a reed had cut it, and she started sucking one finger.

"The district committee called this meeting today. Very soon now, they say, the Japs are going to try to set up more bases. If they manage to get a base at Tongkou — which is only a few dozen // away — that will alter our position here completely. The meeting decided to form a district brigade to keep the Japs out. I was the first to volunteer to go."

His wife lowered her head and muttered:

"Always a step ahead of the others, aren't you?"

"I'm chief of our village guerrillas and one of the cadres: of course I have to take the lead. The others volunteered too. They didn't dare come home, though, for fear their folk would try to hold them back. They chose me to come back and explain things for them to their families. Everyone felt you had more sense than most wives."

His wife digested this in silence.

"I won't try to stop you," she said presently. "But what about us?"

Shusheng pointed to his father's room and told her to keep her voice down.

"You'll be taken care of, naturally. But our village is small and seven fellows are joining the army this time. That doesn't leave many young men at home. We can't look to others for everything: the main burden will fall on you. Dad's old and Xiaohua's too young to do much."

His wife felt a lump in her throat but held back the tears.

"So long as you know what we're up against, that's all."

Shusheng wanted to comfort her but time was short. He still had many things to do before leaving.

"You shoulder the load while I'm away. When we've driven the Japs out and I come home, I'll make it up to you."

With this, Shusheng set off for some neighbours' houses, promising to come back and explain matters to his father.

He didn't come back till cock-crow. His wife was still sitting like a statue in the yard, waiting.

"What instructions have you got for me?" she asked.

"Nothing really. Mind you go on making progress while I'm away. Work hard and learn to read and write."

"Uh-huh."
"Don't fall behind the others."
"Uh-huh. What else?"
"Don't let the Japs or traitors take you alive. If you're caught, fight to the finish." This was the main thing he had to say, and his wife assented in tears.

When day broke she made a little bundle of a new cotton suit, a new towel, a new pair of cloth shoes. The other wives had similar bundles for Shusheng to take. The whole family saw him off. His father, holding Xiaohua's hand, said:

"You're doing the right thing, Shusheng, so I won't stop you. Go with an easy mind. I'll look after your wife and boy for you, don't worry."

The whole village, men and women, young and old, turned out to see him off. Shusheng grinned at them all, stepped into a boat and rowed off.

But there must be something of the clinging vine about women. Two days after Shusheng left, four young wives gathered in his house to talk things over.

"Apparently they're still here: they haven't gone yet. I don't want to cause problems, but there's a jacket I forgot to give him."

"I've something important to say to him."

Shusheng's wife said:

"I heard that the Japs want to set up a base at Tongkou..."

"There's not a chance of our running into them, not if we pay a flying visit."

"I didn't mean to go, but my mother-in-law insists that I ought to see him. What for, I'd like to know?"

Without breathing a word to anyone, the four of them took a small boat and paddled to Ma Village across the river.

They dared not look for their husbands openly there but went to a relative's house at one end of the village.

"You've just missed them," they were told. "They were still here yesterday evening but left some time in the night. No one knows where they've gone. You've no call to worry, though. I hear Shusheng was made a vice-platoon leader straight off: they're all in tremendous spirits."

Shame-faced and blushing, the women took their leave and rowed off again. It was nearly noon, without a cloud in the sky, but on the river was a breeze from the paddy fields and rushes in the south. There was the only boat afloat on this endless expanse of water like rippling quicksilver.

Disappointed and rather upset, each woman was secretly laying the blame on her heartless

brute of a husband. But young people are incurably optimistic and women have a special knack of forgetting their troubles. Very soon they were laughing and chattering again.

"So they just up and left!"

"I'm sure they're having the time of their lives. This means more to them than New Year or getting married."

"They're like wild horses: they won't stay tied up in a stable."

"No, they all break away."

"Take it from me, that man of mine hasn't given one thought to his home since he joined the army."

"That's true. Some young soldiers once stayed in our house. Singing from dawn to dusk they were. We've never larked like that! I was fool enough to think that once they had nothing to do, they'd start looking glum. But what do you suppose? They painted a whole set of white circles on our courtyard wall, and squatted down one by one for target practice, still singing all the time!"

They paddled easily along while water gurgled on each side of the boat. One of them scooped up a water chestnut, still tiny and milky white. She threw it back into the river. The water chestnut floated placidly there, where it would grow.

"I wonder where they've gone."

"He can go to the end of the earth for all I care!"

"Look! A boat!"

They all raised their heads and gazed into the distance.

"Why, they're Japanese soldiers — see that uniform!"

"Quick!"

They rowed on for dear life. One started wishing they had never taken such a risk, another blaming the husbands who had deserted them. But in no time they put these thoughts out of their heads. They must row fast — the larger boat was coming after them.

The Japanese were going as swiftly as they could.

It was lucky that all these young wives had grown up by the river: their boat went like the wind. It shot forward like some flying fish, hardly skimming the water. They had been in and out of boats since they were children, and could paddle as fast as they could spin or sew.

If the enemy overtook them, they would drown themselves in the river.

The large boat was making quick headway. No doubt about it, those were Japanese. The young women clenched their teeth and fought down their



panic. They did not let their hands tremble. The oars plashed loudly, steadily through the water.

"Head for Lotus Creek! It's too shallow for a boat that size."

They raced for the creek, a good many *mu* in extent, where as far as eye could see matted lotus leaves reached towards the genial sun like a solid wall of bronze. Their pink buds, thrust up like arrows, seemed sentinels watching over Baiyangdian.

They rowed for the creek and with one final effort drove their small craft in among the lotus. Some wild ducks flapped their wings and flew off with shrill cries, whirring low over the water. A volley of shots rang out!

Pandemonium broke loose. Sure that they had fallen into an enemy ambush with no hope of escape, they jumped all together into the water. But presently, realizing that all the shots were aimed towards the river, they caught hold of the boat's side and peered cautiously out. Not far away under a broad lotus leaf they saw a man's head — the rest of him was submerged. It was Shusheng. Looking right and left, each soon discovered her husband — so this was where they were!

But the men under the lotus leaves were too busy aiming at the enemy to so much as glance at their wives. Quick shots rang out, and after four or five volleys they threw hand-grenades and rushed forward.

The grenades sank the enemy boat with everything on board, leaving nothing but smoke and fumes of saltpetre on the surface. With shouts and laughter, the men started salvaging trophies. They dived as if they were after fish. They raced to retrieve enemy rifles, cartridge belts, and sack after sack of dripping flour and rice. Shusheng swam with a great splashing after a carton of biscuits bobbing on the waves.

Soaked to the skin, the wives climbed back into their boat.

Holding the biscuits high in one hand and paddling hard with the other, Shusheng shouted towards them:

"Come out of that, you!"

He sounded angry.

They rowed out — what else could they do? Without warning a man popped up from under their bows, and Shusheng's wife was the only one to recognize him. It was the captain of the district brigade. Wiping the water from his face, he demanded:

"What are you doing here?"

Shusheng's wife answered:

"We were taking them some more clothes."

The captain turned to Shusheng:

"Are they all from your village?"

"That's right. A bunch of backward elements!"

He hurled the biscuits into their boat and disappeared with a splash, reappearing some distance away.

The captain laughed.

"Well, your trip wasn't wasted. If not for you, our ambush wouldn't have been so successful. But now you've completed your mission, you'd better hurry home and dry your clothes. The situation is still pretty serious."

By now the men had loaded all their trophies on their boats and were ready to move on. Each of them had plastered a large lotus leaf on his head to keep off the midday sun. The women rescued their bundles which had fallen into the water and threw them over. Then the men's three boats made off quickly towards the southeast, to be swallowed up soon in the heat haze over the river.

The women lost no time in starting back, bedraggled as drowned rats. But all the excitement they had been through soon set them laughing and chattering again. The one in the stern made a face over her shoulder.

"Did you ever see the like? Just couldn't be bothered with us!"

"As if we'd lost face for them!"

They laughed, knowing that they hadn't exactly covered themselves with glory. Still:

"We haven't got rifles. If we had, we could take on the Japs without hiding in the creek!"

"Well, so at last I've seen fighting! What's so wonderful about it? As long as you don't lose your head, anybody can squat there and let off a gun."

"When a boat sinks I can dive to collect stuff too. I promise you I'm a better swimmer than they are — I can go down deeper than that."

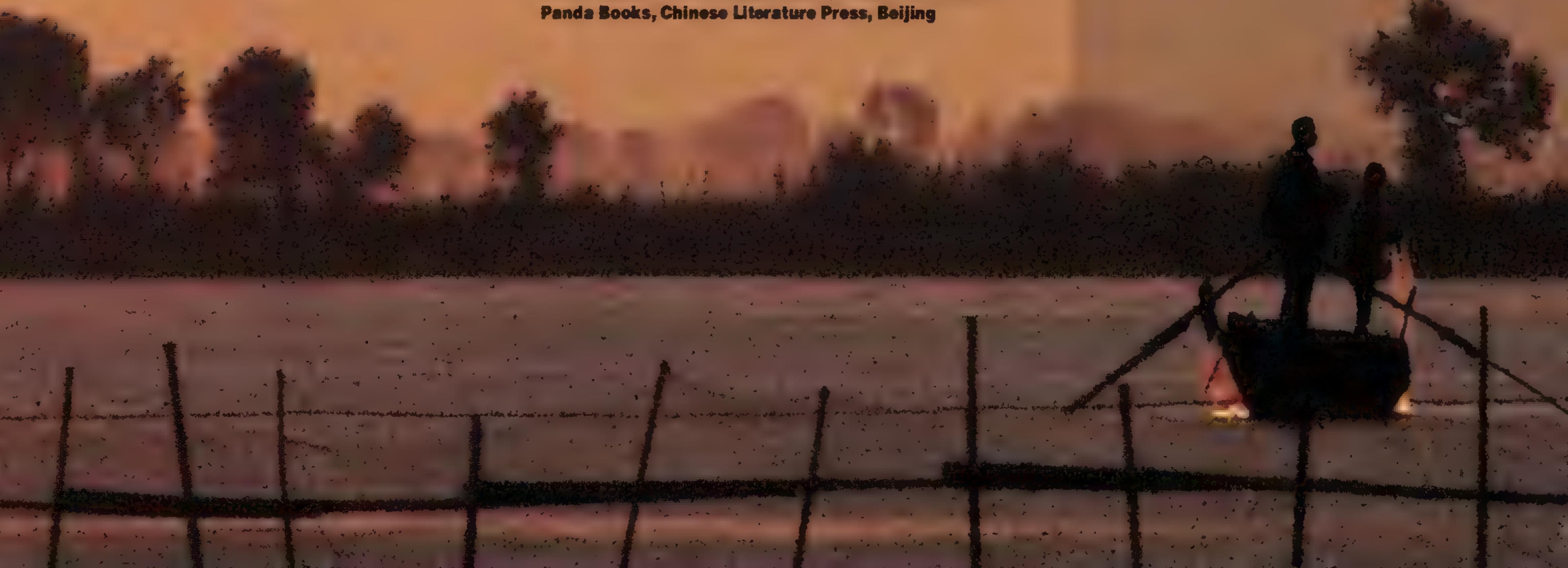
"Let's set up a unit when we go back, or we'll never be able to leave the village again."

"Looking down on us the moment they join the army! In another two years they won't think us worth talking to, but are they all that much better?"

That autumn they learned to fire rifles. When winter came and the time to catch fish in the ice, they took it in turn to take out the sleigh and whizz back and forth over the ice, patrolling the village. When the enemy attempted to "mop up" the marshlands, they worked hand in glove with the army, slipping fearlessly in and out of the sea of reeds.  Translated by Gladys Yang

Photos by Cheng Weidong

Taken from the collection entitled *The Blacksmith and the Carpenter* and reproduced by kind permission of Panda Books, Chinese Literature Press, Beijing



The Many Pools of Lake Baiyangdian

History hovers all around Lake Baiyangdian. Zhaobeikou on the fringes of the lake was the border between Yan and Zhao during the Warring States Period (475 - 221 B.C.). During the Northern Song dynasty (960 - 1127), there was an imperial garrison at the lake to protect it against their contemporary rivals, the Liao dynasty (916 - 1125). Emperor Chengzu of the Ming (reign dates 1403 - 1424) came through here with his armies and built a memorial tower at Laowangdian. On a less martial note, the area also found favour with the Qing emperors; both Kangxi and Qianlong had pleasure palaces constructed here at what are now

the villages of Guolikou, Quantou and Duancun.

Lake Baiyangdian is located in the centre of the rough triangle Beijing-Tianjin-Shijiazhuang. Beijing and Tianjin cooks delight in its aquatic produce, particularly its freshwater turtles and its large green prawns. It is also well-known for reeds and lotus roots.

The area now has more than one thousand beds in hotels and guesthouses of various standards, as well as campsites. There are hundreds of boats of different types to hire, and at least sixty restaurants. With its villages scattered among the reedbeds and the pools, large or small, in between, Baiyangdian presents itself as one vast and very relaxing leisure centre.

Autumn is probably the best time to visit the lake. The closest town and administrative centre is Anxin, forty kilometres east of Baoding in Hebei. The local authorities have recently opened up five beauty spots to tourism.

Yuanyangdian (Mandarin Duck Pool)

The name comes from the resemblance of its two small lakes to a mandarin drake and his mate, which stay faithful through life. There are hotels, restaurants, shops, etc., here, 1.5 kilometres east of the quayside at

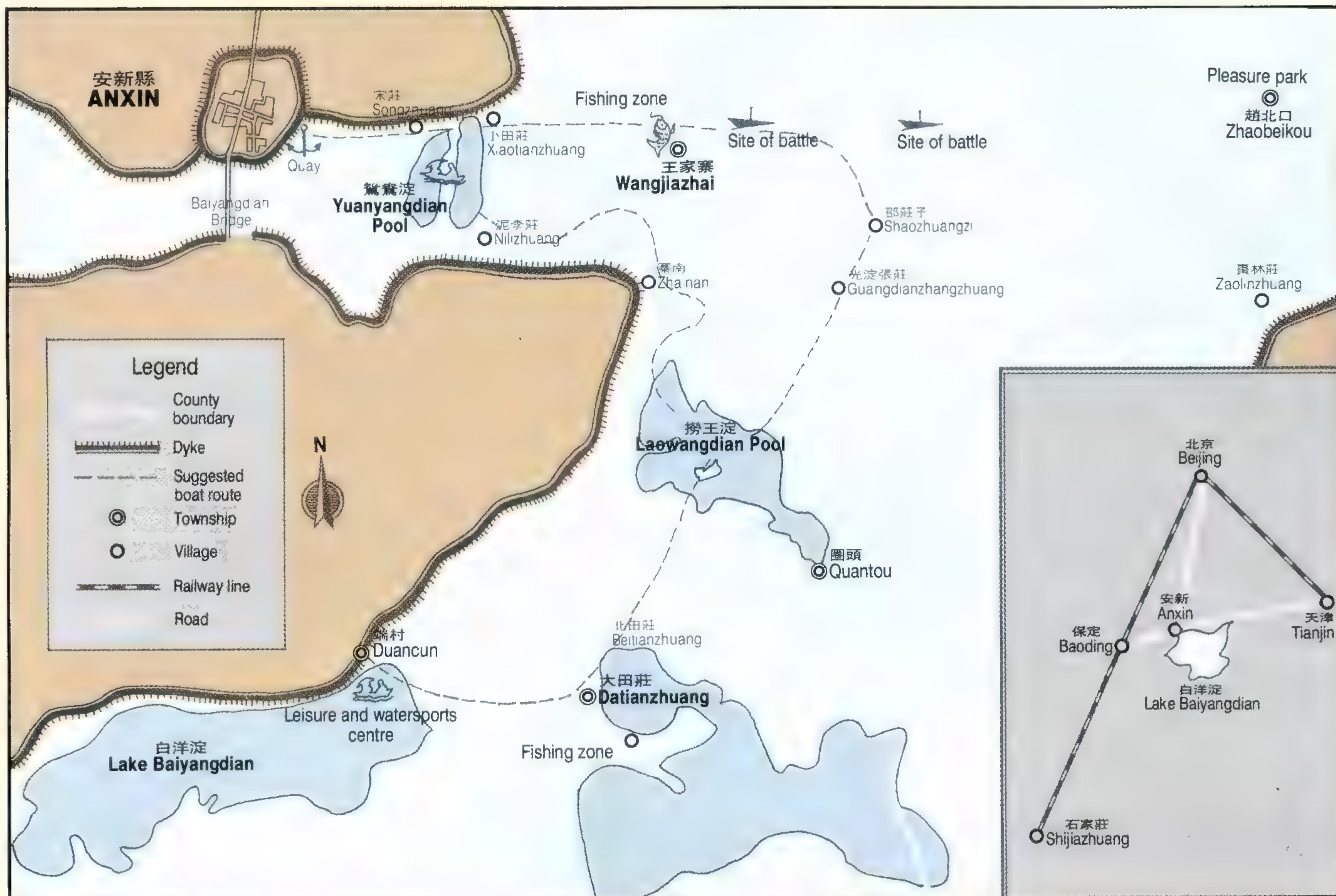
Anxin. The lake also gives good views of Baiyangdian Bridge.

Laowangdian (Scooping Up the Emperor Pool) Situated 8.5 kilometres east of the quayside at Anxin, this lake gets its name from the story that Emperor Qianlong fell into the water during a violent storm and was saved in the nick of time by a local fisherman. At the southern tip of the lake is the site of Qianlong's residence and kitchen at Quantou. Tent accommodation is available.

Baiyangdian (White Ocean Pool) The largest of the 143 lakes and pools here, giving its name to the entire area, this is ten kilometres long from east to west and is a marvellous sight when the lotuses bloom in summer and early autumn. The village of Duancun with Emperor Qianlong's pleasure palace is located beside this lake and offers boating and fishing possibilities.

Wangjiazhai Six kilometres from Anxin's quayside, this hamlet offers around one hundred guestrooms as well as fishing zones. This was the site of a battle during the Sino-Japanese War in the 1940s.

Datianzhuang This village 2.5 kilometres from Duancun's quayside also has hotel accommodation and fishing available. Visitors can go out fishing with local fishermen.



Hebei Specialities

Besides the Cizhou ware introduced in our Special Features, we present other famous products and specialities of Hebei.

The Yishui Inkstone

The Yishui inkstone has a history of more than one thousand years. The source of the inkstone is Taitan, a village 20 kilometres south of Yixian. The Xi family of Yixian in the Southern Tang dynasty (937-975) is said to have made very good ink and inkstones (an inkstone was a traditional requisite in producing ink; a solid stick of ink was rubbed against its flat surface, then water was added into the cavity section to mix the ink to the correct consistency). Xi descendants moved from Yixian to Shezhong (now Shexian in Anhui Province) and continued to earn their living in the same way. Because their products were exquisite and long-lasting, the Xi family was valued by the emperor of the Southern Tang and was granted the surname Li. The ancient inkstone of Yishui still produced in Yixian County is handed down by the Li family.

The stone used for the inkstones is quarried in the Taihang Mountains north of Taitan. It is a kind of light greyish-purple sedimentary rock called Zicui stone. It is naturally patterned with dark green or light yellow and the texture of the stone is very fine, making it ideal for inkstones.

Moreover, the Yishui inkstone is famous for its delicate carving and its simplicity. Each inkstone can be viewed as a piece of art and is as famous as the Duan inkstone of Guangzhou and the She inkstone of Anhui (for more on inkstones, see CHINA TOURISM no. 90).

Quyang's Stone Carvings

The material for the stone carvings of Quyang is white marble taken from Mount Huangshan, south of the county town. The texture of this marble is pure and fine, and its colour does not change with time.

Carvings from Quyang are said to date back to the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). At that time, the craftsmen in the region of Mount Huangshan sculpted fruit, tablets, dragon and phoenix, lions and figures of Guanyin and Buddha from white marble. The earliest stone carvings are found at a pagoda on Goutapo Hill, south of the village of Wangtaibei. Legend has it that an imperial kinsman of the Western Han, Liu Xiu (who later founded the Eastern Han dynasty and proclaimed himself Emperor Guangwu, reign dates 25-57), was pursued by enemies to this mountain. He hid in the

long grass, but his enemies set it on fire. Liu's dog moistened all the grass surrounding him so that he was saved. Later, after his enemies were beaten, Liu made local craftsmen build the pagoda on Goutapo Hill to commemorate his clever dog.

The Quyang carvers' techniques gradually developed during the Tang and Song dynasties. The local craftsmen became the main workforce to decorate the imperial palace at Beijing built by Kublai Khan (reign dates 1260-1294) in the Yuan dynasty.

Their work can still be seen today in Beijing. According to records, Jinshui Bridge in front of the Tian'anmen Gate was designed by Quyang craftsmen. Even the relief sculpture showing the revolutionary struggle at the bottom of the Monument to the People's Heroes on Tian'anmen Square was carved by them. They also participated in the building of some important monuments such as the Great Hall of the People and the Museum of Chinese History.

Health Aids from Baoding

Often in China you see elderly people relaxing in the park, idly turning in their hands two or more metallic balls. These originate in Baoding. Their surface is bright, and they give out a clear, crisp sound when rotated.

These metallic balls have a long history. As early as the Ming dynasty, the craftsmen of Baoding were already producing and selling them. Craftsmanship was highly improved in the Qing dynasty: the originally solid balls became hollow, copper reeds were added, and two kinds were made, one with a high tone, the other low, the two forming a pair. It is said that, when Emperor Guangxu of the Qing dynasty was encoffined, he was holding one of these metallic balls.

From ancient times, the balls have been highly praised by doctors and are considered very effective medical and health aids. They can stimulate the circulation, ease the joints and tendons, strengthen the bones, regulate the nerve centre and prolong life. They are a supplementary instrument to strengthen the body and to prevent common illnesses among the elderly such as hand paralysis, shaking hands, and arthritis.

To use them, take the two balls on the palm of one hand and turn them with the five fingers, making them revolve alternately in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction.

The Cuisine of Baiyangdian

A visit to Lake Baiyangdian provides a good chance to enjoy local seafood and

other aquatic produce, noted for its light and non-greasy flavour and freshness. Here we introduce some famous traditional dishes.

The Carp Banquet: The carp of Baiyangdian is very famous in the north. This banquet includes eight cold dishes, ten hot dishes (dessert inclusive) and a soup, making a total of nineteen dishes. The eight cold dishes consist of one hors d'oeuvres and seven smaller plates, which are mainly different kinds of fish rolls, fish liver, fish slices and fish cakes, served in a hot and peppery or a sweet and sour sauce. The eleven other dishes are also based on fish cooked in various ways and served with other aquatic products. Even the dessert consists of fish rolls deep-fried in syrup, served soaked in ice-cold water, and then scooped up from the water.

Sweet and Sour Carp: Cut open a fresh Baiyangdian carp and deep-fry it in oil until the tail turns upwards and the fish is a golden-yellow colour. Take it out and put it on a dish. Prepare a sweet and sour sauce with green onion, ginger powder, vinegar, sugar and soy sauce and pour it over the fish.

Shelled Shrimps of Longjing: Infuse some Longjing (Dragon Well) tea leaves, which come from Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, in a tea cup or bowl. Then turn the cup (together with the tea inside) upside down on the middle part of a plate. Shell the shrimps, wash them, and add some egg white, cornstarch, soy sauce, salt and wine. Deep-fry the shrimps until they turn red, and put them on the plate, placing them around the tea cup. Gently shake the tea cup before serving to let tea ooze out and mix with the shrimps.

Fried Crab: Gently poach a perfectly round Baiyangdian freshwater crab in water, and shell it. Cook the crab fat and crab meat with paste of egg white in warm oil. Add bamboo shoots, black mushrooms, green onions, ginger and garlic, and the dish is ready for serving.

Steamed Soft-Shelled Turtle: Another traditional dish of Baiyangdian. The head of a fresh turtle is removed and its blood drained. It is boiled at around 80°C to remove any incrustations, then the shell is prised open to clean the inside. The turtle is stuffed with a pork mixture, then placed in stock with the addition of green onion, ginger, garlic, pepper, wine, salt and sliced pork. It is then steamed for about two hours before serving.

Translated by Annette Lee

Hebei's Yesanpo

Yesanpo is reached by train from Yongdingmen railway station in southern Beijing. Take a train on the Beijing-Taiyuan (Shanxi) line and alight either at Shangzhuang/Yesanpo, the location of the holiday village, or at Gougezhuang.

Regular bus services provide transport be-

tween strategic points in the Yesanpo area:

1. Baili Gorge – Holiday Village (19 km)
2. Baili Gorge – Longmen Gorge (28 km)
3. Baili Gorge – Yugu Caves (15 km)
4. Holiday Village – Yugu Caves (14 km)
5. Holiday Village – Longmen Gorge (22 km)

Yesanpo Scenic Areas



Touring Central and Southern Hebei

We would like to map out a rough itinerary for those wishing to base a visit to Hebei on this month's articles.

The central and southern parts of Hebei are relatively easy to reach from Beijing. A good way to start would be to take the Beijing-Taiyuan railway line west to Yesanpo/Shangzhuang or Gougezhuang for a look at the natural beauties of Yesanpo, only a three-hour journey.

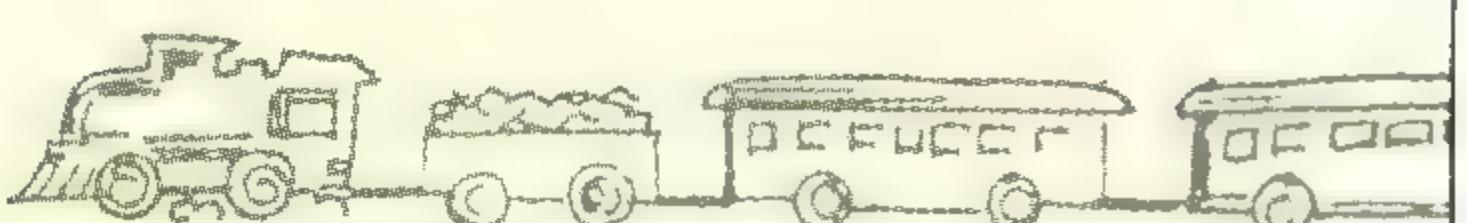
Continuing in a westerly direction would bring you to Laiyuan, a popular summer resort. East of the town rises one of the major peaks in the Taihang Range – Mount Baishi (White Rock) – at 2,000 metres above sea-level. Since there is a motorable road right to the top, this is a favourite excursion.

From Laiyuan, take a long-distance bus east to Yixian, site of one of the capitals of the State of Yan 2,000 years ago. Four kilometres west of Yixian are the Western Qing Mausoleums, covering an area of some 800 square kilometres and including the tombs of four Qing emperors – Yongzheng, Jiaqing, Daoguang and Guangxu. The famous Yishui inkstones (named after the river which flows through Yixian) can be purchased here at favourable prices.

It's long-distance bus again to Baoding due south. Once the capital of Hebei, this was the renowned 'southern gateway' to Beijing. The most interesting place here is the Lianhua (Lotus Flower) Pond in a garden complex built more than 750 years ago. Anxin, east of Baoding, is the jumping-off point for boat trips around reed-studded Lake Baiyangdian.

Since Baoding is on a railway line, it is easiest to continue south by train. At Dingxian, visit the pagoda at Kaiyuan Monastery, built in 1055 during the Song dynasty. At 84 metres high, it is China's tallest brick pagoda.

If you have the time, you could also make a side-trip to Quyang, twenty kilometres to the northwest. Its Beiyue Temple dates from the Northern and Southern Dynasties. The murals inside are magnificent but, unfortunately, photography is strictly prohibited. There are also many stone carvings and stele inscriptions here dating from the Northern Qi, Tang and Qing dynasties. Quyang is renowned for its stone carving and to the south, in the village of



Yangping, you can see marble quarries everywhere. Their products are exported overseas.

Not far east of Dingxian lies Anguo, site of the largest medicinal ingredients market in northern China. Apart from the market, the Yaowang (Medicine King) Temple and the memorial of Guan Hanqing, a famous playwright of the Yuan dynasty, are well worth visiting.

On the way to the provincial capital, Shijiazhuang, stop off at Zhengding. There are no transport problems here since Zhengding is a major tourist attraction, the bronze Avalokitesvara of Longxing Monastery being

accounted one of the 'Four Treasures of Hebei'.

Shijiazhuang itself does not merit much time, but you could make a side-trip to the southeast to Zhaoxian and its ancient stone bridges. Zhaoxian is also noted for its pears, which can weigh around half a kilo each and are very juicy.

From Shijiazhuang, take the train right down to the south of the province and the ancient city of Handan, one-time capital of Zhao. Fifty kilometres to the southwest lie the Xiangtangshan Grottoes and the Cizhou kiln at Pengcheng.

Ninety-two kilometres west of Handan is

Shexian, and ten kilometres north of Shexian is the Wahuang Temple dedicated to Nüwa, goddess of fertility who, with her brother Fuxi, is considered one of the ancestors of humankind. The most interesting (if crowded) time for a visit here would be on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month (generally falling in October), when a pilgrimage to the temple draws devotees from Hebei, Henan and Shanxi.

From Handan, you could take a train straight back to Beijing or continue south to Zhengzhou in Henan for Luoyang and the other important sites of antiquity along the Huanghe (Yellow River).

**Train Schedules
Beijing – Baoding – Shijiazhuang – Handan – Zhengzhou**

279 F.T.	251 F.T.	245 F.T.	241/249 F.T.	231 F.T.	189 F.T.	163 F.T.	149 F.T.	145/148 F.T.	121 F.T.	Train No. Station	122 F.T.	146/147 F.T.	150 F.T.	164 F.T.	190 F.T.	232 F.T.	242/250 F.T.	246 F.T.	252 F.T.	280 F.T.
1926	2359	1130	0044	0554	1706	0826	2000	0922	2126	Beijing	0500	0430	1550	2306	0850	0340	2122	0400	0644	1644
2145	0220	1404	0257	0807	1926	1028	2212	1141	2342	Baoding	0259	0219	1338	2058	0638	0133	1916	0159	0353	1431
2231	0306	1454	0346	0853	2013	—	2258	1226	0027	Dingzhou	0207	0125	1245	1954	0545	0038	1823	0104	0253	1338
2341	0415	1605	0504	1003	2123	1211	0007	1333	0135	Shijiazhuang	0112	0031	1152	1901	0452	2332	1730	0009	0158	1244
0100	0542	1729	0639	1129	2251	1332	0134	1459	0300	Xingtai	2333	2252	1013	1722	0311	2205	1522	2230	0017	1105
0200	0630	1834	0739	1215	2354	1426	0219	1543	0357	Handan	2247	2206	0927	1636	0223	2110	1441	2137	2331	1012
0257	0735	1932	0836	1320	0052	1524	0323	1639	0449	Anyang	2156	2114	0836	1545	0132	2017	1340	2038	2232	0914
0425	0929	2112	1007	1436	0226	1708	0504	1807	0617	Xinxiang	2026	1944	0659	1415	2355	1834	1114	1901	2049	0739
0541	1030	2225	1122	To Luoyang	To Chongqing	To Chengdu	To Guiyang	To Nanchang	To Lanzhou and Xining	Zhengzhou	1901	1834	0548	1305			1000	1751	1938	0625
To Xian		To Wuchang	To Xiangfan and Yichang								From Lanzhou and Xining	From Nanchang	From Guiyang	From Chengdu	From Chongqing	From Luoyang	From Xiangfan and Yichang	From Wuchang		From Xian

F.T. – Fast through passenger train

Main Shopping Stores in Shijiazhuang

Name	Address	Telephone
Shijiazhuang Friendship Store	Yuhua Road	49315
Hebei Arts and Crafts Bazaar	71 Jiefang Road	632003
Hebei Hotel Bazaar	South Building, 23 Yucai Street	615815
International Building Bazaar	23 Chang'an Road West	48277
Hebei Cultural and Historical Relics Shop	Yucai Street	614487
Hebei Tourism Service Shop	23 Yuhua Road Central	43452
Hebei Tourist Products Bazaar	20 Jiefang Road	632610
Hebei Qiaohui Shop	Yuhua Road Central	49643

Guesthouses and Hotels in Central and Southern Hebei

City	Name	Address	Telephone
Shijiazhuang	Hebei Hotel	23 Yucai Street	615961
	International Building	23 Chang'an Road West	48961
	Shijiazhuang Hotel	48 Qingshui Street	612901
	Jiuzhou Hotel	10 Shigang Avenue	741078
Baoding	Baoding Hotel	Xinhua Road North	24126
	Baoding Old City Hotel	65 Chenghuangmiao Street	26922
Handan	Handan Hotel	74 Zhonghua Avenue	25911
	Honglou Hotel	87 Renmin Road	23304
Cangzhou	Cangzhou Hotel	54 Xihuang Road Central	24522
	Foreigners Guesthouse	3 Yingbin Road	23895

**Train Schedules
Beijing South – Yuangping – Taiyuan**

597 O.	595 O.	Train No. Station	596 O.	598 O.
17:40	06:07	Beijing South	21:00	13:05
1756	06:23	Fengtai	20:47	12:52
1907	07:39	Lianggezhuang	19:38	11:35
2003	08:42	Shidu	18:41	10:41
2012	08:52	Pingyu	18:32	10:31
2030	09:07	*Shangzhuang	18:20	10:19
2043	09:21	*Gougezhuang	18:08	10:06
2111	09:50	Baijian	17:46	09:44
2330	1203	Laiyuan	15:46	07:33
0119	1408	Lingqiu	14:15	05:40
	1655	Daixian	11:17	
	1756	Yuangping	10:23	
	1847	Xinzhou	0930	
	2100	Taiyuan	0716	

O – Ordinary passenger train

* Passengers visiting Yesanpo can get off at Shangzhuang or Gougezhuang

Hebei: Past Coverage in CHINA TOURISM

No. 31 Hebei Special (Four Greats Along the Great Wall; A Summary of Chinese History; Four Reasons Why Hebei Is Incomparable; Touring Guide to Qinhuangdao and Beidaihe)

No. 65 Chengde Special (Commoners in the Imperial Garden Resort; 'Mulan Qixian'; The Eight Outer Temples)

No. 93 Anguo Medicine Fair

No. 100 A Feast of Acrobatic Skills (Wugiao); Great Wall, Here We Come!

No. 101 The Grand Canal: Glimpses of Land and People; Stories Behind the Relics; Historic Traces of Islam

No. 120 Longxing Monastery and Its Bronze Bodhisattva



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SICHUAN SILK CARPET

四川絲毯



四川絲毯係採用蠶絲和絹絲為主要原料，按照傳統工藝，經手工精心編織而成，毯面光潔，染色牢固，質地柔韌，富有彈性，分地毯和掛毯兩大類，有數百個花色品種供客戶選擇。

四川絲毯圖案豐富多彩，既有傳統的北京式、美術式、彩花式、風景式、敦煌式、波斯式，又有專業設計人員創新設計的各種新穎圖案，具有獨特的藝術風格和鮮明的東方色彩。

四川絲毯歷史悠久，由四川省畜產分公司直接經營出口，歡迎選購。

With natural silk and spun silk as the main material, Sichuan silk carpets are exquisitely hand woven from traditional methods. Dyed fast, bright and clean, pliable and tough, soft and springy, they are classified into two categories, i.e. carpets and hanging tapestry. Available for customers' choice is a complete range of variety with complete specifications.

Sichuan carpets are characterized by their rich array of designs. Not only available are the traditional Beijing style, artistic style, floral patterns, landscape patterns, patterns of Dunhuang painting, and Persian style, but also the newly designed patterns which are unique in their artistic styles and oriental taste.

Sichuan is noted for its long history in the production of silk carpets. Formerly exported by Shanghai under the brand name of "Pine and Crane", Sichuan silk carpets are now directly exported by SICHUAN ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS IMP. & EXP. CORP.

ANIBY

四川省畜產進出口公司

中國四川省成都市一環路北4段102號

電話：337586 電報：6651

電傳：60153 CNABS CN

SICHUAN ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS IMP. & EXP. CORP.

102 Section 4 North, Yi Huan Road, Chengdu, China

Tel: 337586 Cable: 6651

Tlx: 60153 CNABS CN

The Embroidery of Southern

The charming articles we see here are the result of the amalgamation of two local arts and crafts of southern Shanxi Province. The babies' bibs, breast-cloths and jackets, the aprons, cushion covers, special birthday sheets and so on are embroidered with themes taken from Pu opera.

The oldest of the four main *bangzi* (regional operas) of Shanxi, Pu opera is also popular in the neighbouring provinces of Shaanxi, Henan, Gansu and parts of Qinghai. It originated in Puzhou (present-day Yongji), hence its name.

Following the traditions passed on from generation to generation, the women of southern Shanxi love to reproduce their favourite stories, their heroes and heroines, from Pu opera, on all sorts of domestic items. Their work is usually executed on a background of silk, satin or cotton fabric using a variety of stitches in bright yet harmonious, auspicious colours.

C

Translated by M.T.



Photo by Chan Yat Nin

Shanxi

PHOTOS BY LIU ANXIN
TEXT BY CHAN YAT NIN



Photo by Chan Yat Nin



Aspiring to the Heights

PHOTOS BY CHUNG KIN MAN
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY LI WO TAK

Chung Kin Man is one of Hong Kong's best-known mountaineers and the founder of the Hong Kong Mountaineering Training Centre, which he currently manages.

According to Chung, some of the interest for him in climbing mountains all over the world is that: 'I can see the land and its people as well as toughen myself, sharpen my wits and learn to be more independent.' His ambition is to conquer the highest peak on every continent.

Chung Kin Man started to develop an interest in climbing and in exploring the countryside of Hong Kong at a very early age. In 1972 he learned the basics of rock-climbing and practised them whenever he had the opportunity. As the sport of mountaineering originated in Europe, Chung first set his sights on that continent's mountains. He went to Belgium in 1977 and worked part-time while studying graphic design. During his holidays he travelled and climbed mountains, managing to visit almost all the countries of Europe in the process.

In his seventeen years of mountaineering, his conquests have included France's Mont Blanc which, at 4,807 metres, is the highest mountain in Europe; Alaska's 6,194-metre-high Mount McKinley, highest in North America; Tanzania's 5,895-metre Mount Kilimanjaro, highest in Africa; and Chile's 6,800-metre Mount Tupungato, one of the highest in South America (the highest being the 6,960-metre Acancagua).

In China, Chung Kin Man has attempted, so far unsuccessfully, to scale the 7,546-metre Muztagata in the Pamirs in western Xinjiang, close to the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Mount Gongga, the highest mountain in Sichuan Province, 7,556 metres above sea-level (see CHINA TOURISM no. 67). In the Himalayan Mountains he has tried the 8,012-metre-high Xixabangma (Gosainthan) close to the Sino-Nepalese border, which is ranked fourteenth among the world's peaks (see CHINA TOURISM no. 100). His most recent expedition in China in July 1989 was an ambitious attempt on the 7,553-metre Zhangzi Peak on the north face of Qomolangma (Everest) in Tibet. This was a joint Sino-Hong Kong expedition led by Chung, and it proved successful although he himself did not take part in the final ascent.

Why has he devoted so much of his life to mountain expeditions? He scratches his head: 'I don't quite know. But coming into contact with different peoples and customs is a new experience every time. So the more I climb, the greater the interest I develop.'

In 1983 he came across the Uygurs on his Muztagata expedition; this was the first time he had encountered a Caucasian minority people in China. They lived in simple mud huts but

dressed in colourful clothes and looked so much more exotic than the residents of an average Chinese city. 'I think the region had not been open to the outside world all that long at that time. We were as curious about them as they were about us, and we all ended up standing staring at each other. It was rather amusing!'

In 1987, while preparing for the Xixabangma expedition, he visited many Tibetan homes looking for yaks capable of carrying heavy loads for the team. The outside of the houses or tents were painted with striking designs, often religious in significance. The walls were liberally smeared with the cowdung which the Tibetans dried for fuel. In the end, he did manage to find several yaks, but their owners did not tie them up properly. The following day they were nowhere to be seen and the team was hopping mad. They had to track the yaks deep into the mountains to recover them.

Having climbed both the highest and the most famous of Sichuan's mountains – the 7,566-metre Gongga and the 3,099-metre Emei – Chung states that: 'As far as climate is concerned, Emei has comparatively mild changes. Besides, there are people going up and down the mountain all the time and there are shelters and guesthouses everywhere. But Gongga is a very different prospect. At that great height the weather is unpredictable. You can easily get altitude sickness and there's not a soul around to provide assistance. You have to camp in the snow at night. If you haven't brought enough warm clothes or food supplies, you can easily freeze or starve to death.'

After all the giants he has climbed, Mount Emei must have been an easy climb? Not really. He found he was breathing hard and got tired but, since he was used to high altitudes, at least he suffered none of the headaches which some of those around him experienced. When he reached the summit of Emei and looked over to Gongga, he immediately realized how small was Emei and how vast and magnificent Gongga. However, he recalls: 'High up on Mount Gongga, at around 7,000 metres, the most you can see is blue sky and white clouds. If there is mist or heavy snow, that is that – zero visibility. Nothing to be compared with the beautiful views you get from Emei.'

Chung Kin Man admits that he is obsessed with mountains and gets the greatest satisfaction out of conquering them and setting his own personal records. There is nothing like going through so many difficulties to achieve success in the end. Reaching the summit is often an emotional moment and Chung and his colleagues have been known to shed tears. However, it is important not to lose one's head at such times so they generally only stay on the summit for half an hour, then hurry down the mountain for fear of a change in the weather and to conserve oxygen.



1

For the time being Chung is concentrating on the more challenging peaks. He believes that he should leave China's famous scenic mountains for later, when he is older and less able to cope with the physical demands posed by the world's giants.

Many people are discouraged by the thought of the complicated preparations and the high degree of personal risk involved in mountain-climbing. But Chung stresses that the quantity of equipment depends very much on the individual mountain, its height, its approach route, its nearness to human settlements, etc. Apart from crampons, ice picks, and so on for tackling snow peaks, it is only for peaks of over 6,000 or 7,000 metres that you are talking of a true expedition. In the latter case, too, since you may be staying at high altitudes for one to two months, you need to undergo physical training.

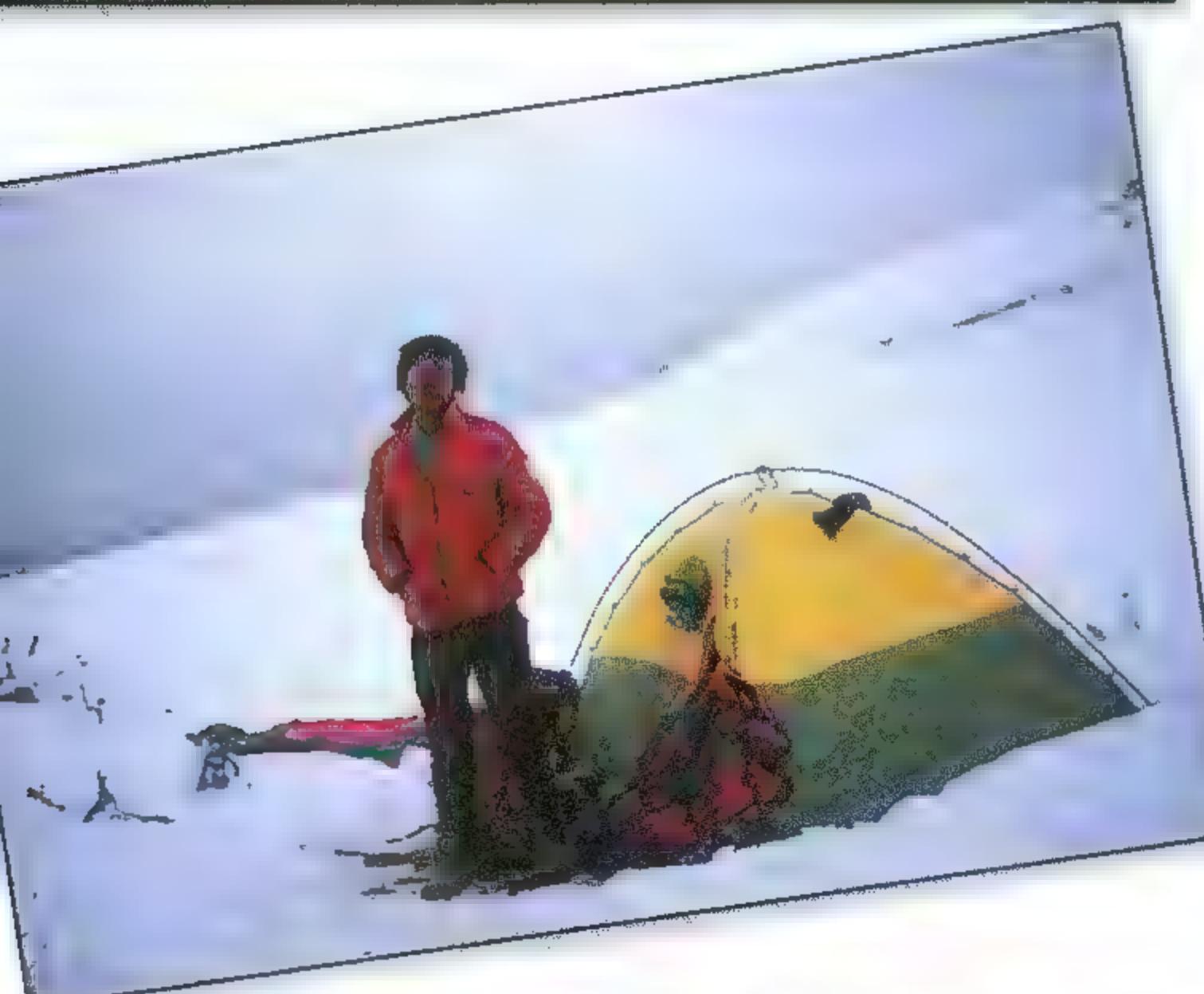
Still, as long as your preparations are thorough, mountaineering is not really all that dangerous, thinks Chung. Compared with other forms of sport, the casualty rate is not that high and an experienced climber can reduce the possibility of accidents. Chung recalls one incident when he was climbing E. Korzhenevskaya Peak in the Soviet Union; this peak lies close to the Sino-Soviet border in the Pamirs. There were over two hundred expedition members. However, the unpredictable weather, as well as sickness and accidents, made their climb very difficult and over a dozen people died. As they were finally approaching the summit, they had to pass a spot swept by frequent avalanches. Chung's experience told him that there was a very great risk that they might be hit by an avalanche. In the end, the whole team decided to descend and repeat the climb if there was another chance. Chung says: 'If I had been six or seven years younger, I would have probably have braved the devil and insisted on continuing up despite the danger.'

He admits he has known some very bad moments. 'Like that time I was up Alaska's Mount McKinley and got stuck in a snowstorm at 6,000 metres. After a few days we ran out of food and fuel and still the weather worsened. In the end, we had to descend despite the danger. We were crawling about on the slopes and the wind blew my cap away, but I hardly noticed. All I could think about was getting back to base camp as fast as possible. When I did manage to get back down, I discovered I had frostbite in my ears. They were swollen, turning black, and blistered, yet I felt no pain at all. I went at once to the hospital and the doctor told me my ears would have to be cut off! I was so scared....' Fortunately, after twenty-four hours of observation, the condition of his ears improved and after a month of treatment they were cured – with the loss of only a small snippet.

In 1985, while climbing Mount Gongga, Chung and his team put up their tents at 6,000 metres in a place which they thought was safe.



2



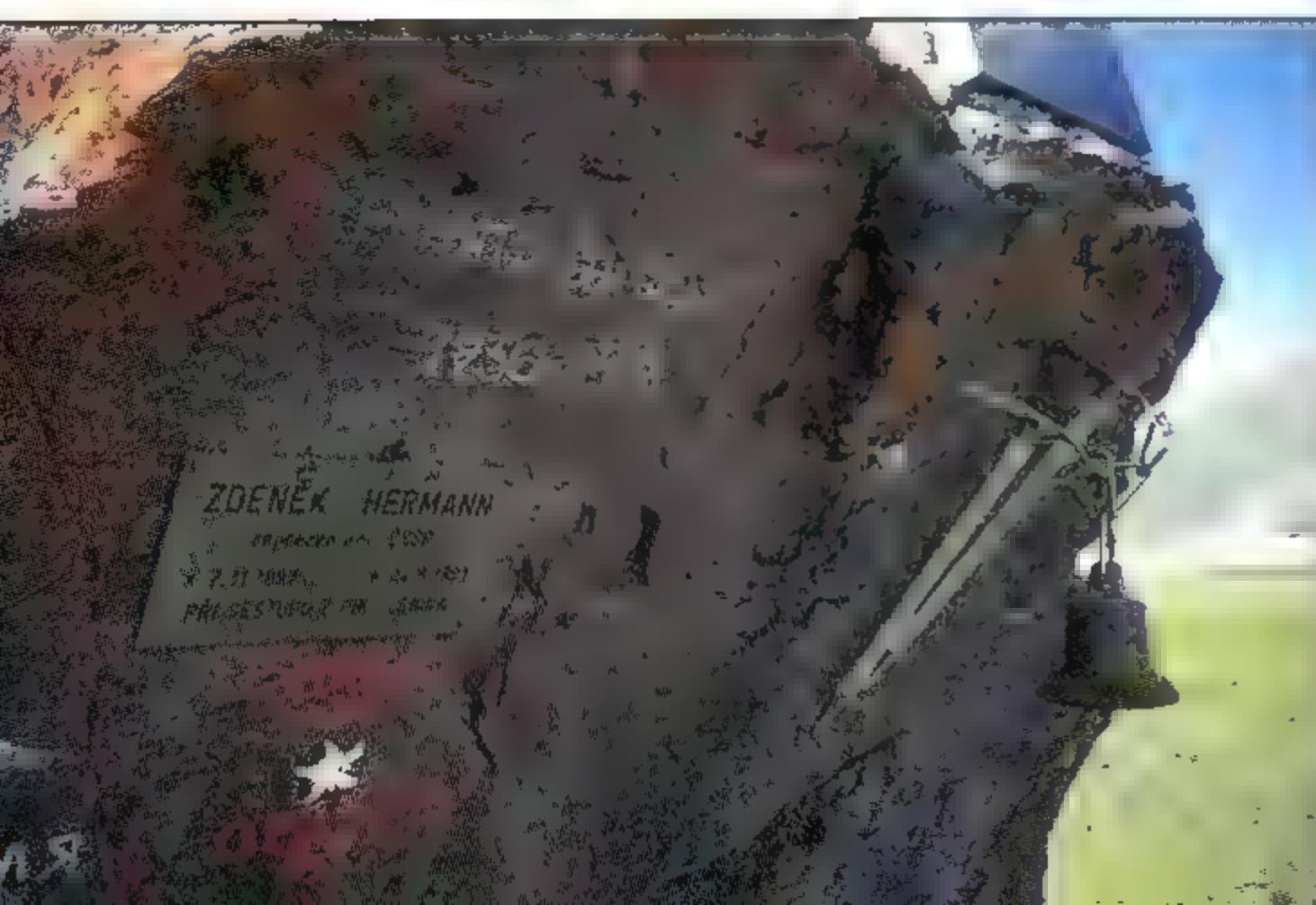
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But that night there was an avalanche and the tents were buried. Waking with a jump, the team had to cut the tents open from the inside and crawl out. As they only had light sleeping garments on, they were shivering in temperatures of below -20°C. What was worse, their warm clothes and boots were still in the tents, under the mass of snow and ice! Having shovelled them out, they sat and waited for the dawn, fearing a repeat avalanche at any time. On the descent, they were narrowly missed by an enormous avalanche (for more on this near-disastrous adventure, see CHINA TOURISM no. 67).

Chung is often up in the mountains for long periods. He stayed for about a month each time on Muztagata and Xixabangma in 1983 and 1987 respectively. How does he pass the days? 'Oh, there's lots to do. Since the weather is so changeable and the difference between night-time and daytime temperatures is so huge, it's not unusual to have to change your clothes a dozen times in a 24-hour span. And it can take you a good half an hour each time as you can only move slowly in the thin air. It also takes a lot of time to prepare meals. As there is no water, you have to melt ice by boiling it over a gas stove. Apart from all this, of course, we have to climb the mountain carrying heavy loads. If you're climbing from 5,000 to 6,000 metres, say, a 1,000-metre increase in altitude that might take you a couple of hours at sea-level can take two to three days at this altitude. And you need to conserve as much of your energy as possible in order to have a hope of making it to the top.'

One of the major hazards is a snowstorm since it can trigger an avalanche or trap you on the mountain. Chung was stuck for several days in a snowstorm on E. Korzhenevskaya Peak. All he could do was shelter inside the tent, reading books and writing up his diary. The monotony started to get on his nerves. But once the snowstorm passed, the weather cleared up and everything changed. 'When I came out of the tent and found the sky so blue, the snow so white, and took deep breaths of the fresh air, I felt intensely exhilarated. This is definitely another of the reasons why I love to climb mountains.'

Translated by M.K.

1 On Mont Blanc

2 At the foot of the Pamirs in the Soviet Union: the site of an international mountaineering conference

3 A camp on Mount Gongga

4 Frostbite afflicts a team member on Xixabangma

5 Xixabangma rises behind a lake at 4,000 metres

6 A rock on the approach to E. Korzhenevskaya Peak bears the record of those who have died there

Lotus Creek

The present short story, set in 1940, was actually written in 1945. Its background is the period of the Japanese occupation. China's northeastern provinces — Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning — were invaded in 1931, after which Japanese forces progressively occupied all the provinces east and north of the Huanghe (Yellow River), the Yangtse Valley up as far as Lake Dongting, and all the major cities east of a line running between Zhengzhou in Henan and Guangzhou in Guangdong. Hebei was inevitably in the thick of operations.

Although the characters presented in this short story are ordinary villagers, they too get caught up in guerrilla activities. Their actions give us something of the atmosphere of the times for people even in this rural backwater, living among the reedbeds of Hebei's Lake Baiyangdian — neatly dovetailing in with this month's special theme.

The writer Sun Li was born in Hebei in 1913 and grew up in the countryside there. After leaving school he moved to Beijing and became a clerk. During the war against Japan he worked as a correspondent, editor and teacher in the Fuping Mountains in Hebei; he began his literary career in 1939. After 1949 Sun Li worked as an editor for a number of publications. His works include *Stormy Years*, a novel; *The Blacksmith and the Carpenter*, a novelette; and other stories.

It was a summer night in the year 1940. The moon had risen and the little courtyard was delightfully fresh and clean. The rushes split during the day were damp and supple, just waiting to be woven into mats. A woman was sitting in the yard plaiting the long soft rushes with nimble fingers. The thin, fine strands leaped and twisted in her arms.

Baiyangdian lies in the middle of the province of Hebei and is known all over China for its reeds and rushes. I can't tell you the exact area grown with them nor the yearly output. All I know is that each year when the rush flowers blow in the breeze and the leaves turn yellow, the whole crop is cut and stacked in the squares round Baiyangdian like a Great Wall of reeds. The women plait mats in their threshing-fields or courtyards, vast quantities of silvery, snow-white mats. And in June, when the water in the creek is high, countless boats ship them away, until soon towns and villages in all parts of the country have these finely woven mats with their lovely designs.

"Baiyangdian mats are best," is quite an axiom.

The young woman in the yard was plaiting a mat, seated on the long stretch of it already accomplished where she seemed enthroned on virgin snow or on a fleecy cloud. From time to time she strained her eyes towards the creek, another world of silver white. Light, translucent mist had risen over the water, and the breeze was laden with the scent of fresh lotus leaves.

The gate was still open — her husband wasn't home yet.

It was very late before her husband came home. He was twenty-five or twenty-six, a barefoot young fellow in a large straw hat, a spotless white shirt and black trousers rolled up over his knees. His name was Shusheng and he was chief of the anti-Japanese guerrillas in Lesser Reed Village. Today he had taken his men to the district town for a meeting. His wife looked up with a smile as he came in.

"What kept you so long today?"

She stood up to fetch him some food. Shusheng sat on the steps.

"Never mind about that — I've eaten."

She sat down on the mat again. Her husband's face was rather flushed and he seemed out of breath.

"Where are the others?" she asked.

"Still in town. How's Dad?"

"Asleep."

"And Xiaohua?"

"He was out half the day with his grandad shrimp and went to bed hours ago. Why haven't the others come back?"

Shusheng gave a forced laugh.

"What's wrong with you?"

"I'm joining the army tomorrow," he said softly.

His wife's hand twitched as if a reed had cut it, and she started sucking one finger.

"The district committee called this meeting today. Very soon now, they say, the Japs are going to try to set up more bases. If they manage to get a base at Tongkou, which is only a few dozen li away — that will alter our position here completely. The meeting decided to form a district brigade to keep the Japs out. I was the first to volunteer to go."

His wife lowered her head and muttered:

"Always a step ahead of the others, aren't you?"

"I'm chief of our village guerrillas and one of the cadres: of course I have to take the lead. The others volunteered too. They didn't dare come home, though, for fear their folk would try to hold them back. They chose me to come back and explain things for them to their families. Everyone felt you had more sense than most wives."

His wife digested this in silence.

"I won't try to stop you," she said presently. "But what about us?"

Shusheng pointed to his father's room and told her to keep her voice down.

"You'll be taken care of, naturally. But our village is small and seven fellows are joining the army this time. That doesn't leave many young men at home. We can't look to others for everything: the main burden will fall on you. Dad's old and Xiaohua's too young to do much."

His wife felt a lump in her throat but held back the tears.

"So long as you know what we're up against, that's all."

Shusheng wanted to comfort her but time was short. He still had many things to do before leaving.

"You shoulder the load while I'm away. When we've driven the Japs out and I come home, I'll make it up to you."

With this, Shusheng set off for some neighbours' houses, promising to come back and explain matters to his father.

He didn't come back till cock-crow. His wife was still sitting like a statue in the yard, waiting.

"What instructions have you got for me?" she asked.

"Nothing really. Mind you go on making progress while I'm away. Work hard and learn to read and write."

"Uh-huh."
"Don't fall behind the others."
"Uh-huh. What else?"

"Don't let the Japs or traitors take you alive. If you're caught, fight to the finish." This was the main thing he had to say, and his wife assented in tears.

When day broke she made a little bundle of a new cotton suit, a new towel, a new pair of cloth shoes. The other wives had similar bundles for Shusheng to take. The whole family saw him off. His father, holding Xiaohua's hand, said: "You're doing the right thing, Shusheng, so I won't stop you. Go with an easy mind. I'll look after your wife and boy for you, don't worry."

The whole village, men and women, young and old, turned out to see him off. Shusheng grinned at them all, stepped into a boat and rowed off.

But there must be something of the clinging vine about women. Two days after Shusheng left, four young wives gathered in his house to talk things over.

"Apparently they're still here: they haven't gone yet. I don't want to cause problems, but there's a jacket I forgot to give him."

"I've something important to say to him."

Shusheng's wife said:

"I heard that the Japs want to set up a base at Tongkou..."

"There's not a chance of our running into them, not if we pay a flying visit."

"I didn't mean to go, but my mother-in-law insists that I ought to see him. What for, I'd like to know?"

Without breathing a word to anyone, the four of them took a small boat and paddled to Ma Village across the river.

They dared not look for their husbands openly there but went to a relative's house at one end of the village.

"You've just missed them," they were told. "They were still here yesterday evening but left some time in the night. No one knows where they've gone. You've no call to worry, though. I hear Shusheng was made a vice-platoon leader straight off: they're all in tremendous spirits."

Shame-faced and blushing, the women took their leave and rowed off again. It was nearly noon, without a cloud in the sky, but on the river was a breeze from the paddy fields and rushes in the south. There was the only boat afloat on this endless expanse of water like rippling quicksilver.

Disappointed and rather upset, each woman was secretly laying the blame on her heartless

brute of a husband. But young people are incurably optimistic and women have a special knack of forgetting their troubles. Very soon they were laughing and chattering again.

"So they just up and left!"

"I'm sure they're having the time of their lives. This means more to them than New Year or getting married."

"They're like wild horses: they won't stay tied up in a stable."

"No, they all break away."

"Take it from me, that man of mine hasn't given one thought to his home since he joined the army."

"That's true. Some young soldiers once stayed in our house. Singing from dawn to dusk they were. We've never larked like that! I was fool enough to think that once they had nothing to do, they'd start looking glum. But what do you suppose? They painted a whole set of white circles on our courtyard wall, and squatted down one by one for target practice, still singing all the time!"

They paddled easily along while water gurgled on each side of the boat. One of them scooped up a water chestnut, still tiny and milky white. She threw it back into the river. The water chestnut floated placidly there, where it would grow.

"I wonder where they've gone."

"He can go to the end of the earth for all I care!"

"Look! A boat!"

They all raised their heads and gazed into the distance.

"Why, they're Japanese soldiers — see that uniform!"

"Quick!"

They rowed on for dear life. One started wishing they had never taken such a risk, another blaming the husbands who had deserted them. But in no time they put these thoughts out of their heads. They must row fast — the larger boat was coming after them.

The Japanese were going as swiftly as they could.

It was lucky that all these young wives had grown up by the river: their boat went like the wind. It shot forward like some flying fish, hardly skimming the water. They had been in and out of boats since they were children, and could paddle as fast as they could spin or sew.

If the enemy overtook them, they would drown themselves in the river.

The large boat was making quick headway. No doubt about it, those were Japanese. The young women clenched their teeth and fought down their



panic. They did not let their hands tremble. The oars plashed loudly, steadily through the water.

"Head for Lotus Creek! It's too shallow for a boat that size."

They raced for the creek; a good many *mu* in extent, where as far as eye could see massed lotus leaves reached towards the genial sun like a solid wall of bronze. Their pink buds, thrust up like arrows, seemed sentinels watching over Baiyangdian.

They rowed for the creek and with one final effort drove their small craft in among the lotus. Some wild ducks flapped their wings and flew off with shrill cries, whirring low over the water. A volley of shots rang out!

Pandemonium broke loose. Sure that they had fallen into an enemy ambush with no hope of escape, they jumped all together into the water. But presently, realizing that all the shots were aimed towards the river, they caught hold of the boat's side and peered cautiously out. Not far away under a broad lotus leaf they saw a man's head — the rest of him was submerged. It was Shusheng. Looking right and left, each soon discovered her husband — so this was where they were!

But the men under the lotus leaves were too busy aiming at the enemy to so much as glance at their wives. Quick shots rang out, and after four or five volleys they threw hand-grenades and rushed forward.

The grenades sank the enemy boat with everything on board, leaving nothing but smoke and fumes of saltpetre on the surface. With shouts and laughter, the men started salvaging trophies. They dived as if they were after fish. They raced to retrieve enemy rifles, cartridge belts, and sack after sack of dripping flour and rice. Shusheng swam with a great splashing after a carton of biscuits bobbing on the waves.

Soaked to the skin, the wives climbed back into their boat.

Holding the biscuits high in one hand and paddling hard with the other, Shusheng shouted towards them:

"Come out of that, you!"

He sounded angry.

They rowed out — what else could they do? Without warning a man popped up from under their bows, and Shusheng's wife was the only one to recognize him. It was the captain of the district brigade. Wiping the water from his face, he demanded:

"What are you doing here?"

Shusheng's wife answered:

"We were taking them some more clothes."

The captain turned to Shusheng:

"Are they all from your village?"

"That's right. A bunch of backward elements!"

He hurled the biscuits into their boat and disappeared with a splash, reappearing some distance away.

The captain laughed.

"Well, your trip wasn't wasted. If not for you, our ambush wouldn't have been so successful. But now you've completed your mission, you'd better hurry home and dry your clothes. The situation is still pretty serious."

By now the men had loaded all their trophies on their boats and were ready to move on. Each of them had plastered a large lotus leaf on his head to keep off the midday sun. The women rescued their bundles which had fallen into the water and threw them over. Then the men's three boats made off quickly towards the southeast, to be swallowed up soon in the heat haze over the river.

The women lost no time in starting back, bedraggled as drowned rats. But all the excitement they had been through soon set them laughing and chattering again. The one in the stern made a face over her shoulder.

"Did you ever see the like? Just couldn't be bothered with us!"

"As if we'd lost face for them!"

They laughed, knowing that they hadn't exactly covered themselves with glory. Still:

"We haven't got rifles. If we had, we could take on the Japs without hiding in the creek."

"Well, so at last I've seen fighting! What's so wonderful about it? As long as you don't lose your head, anybody can squat there and let off a gun."

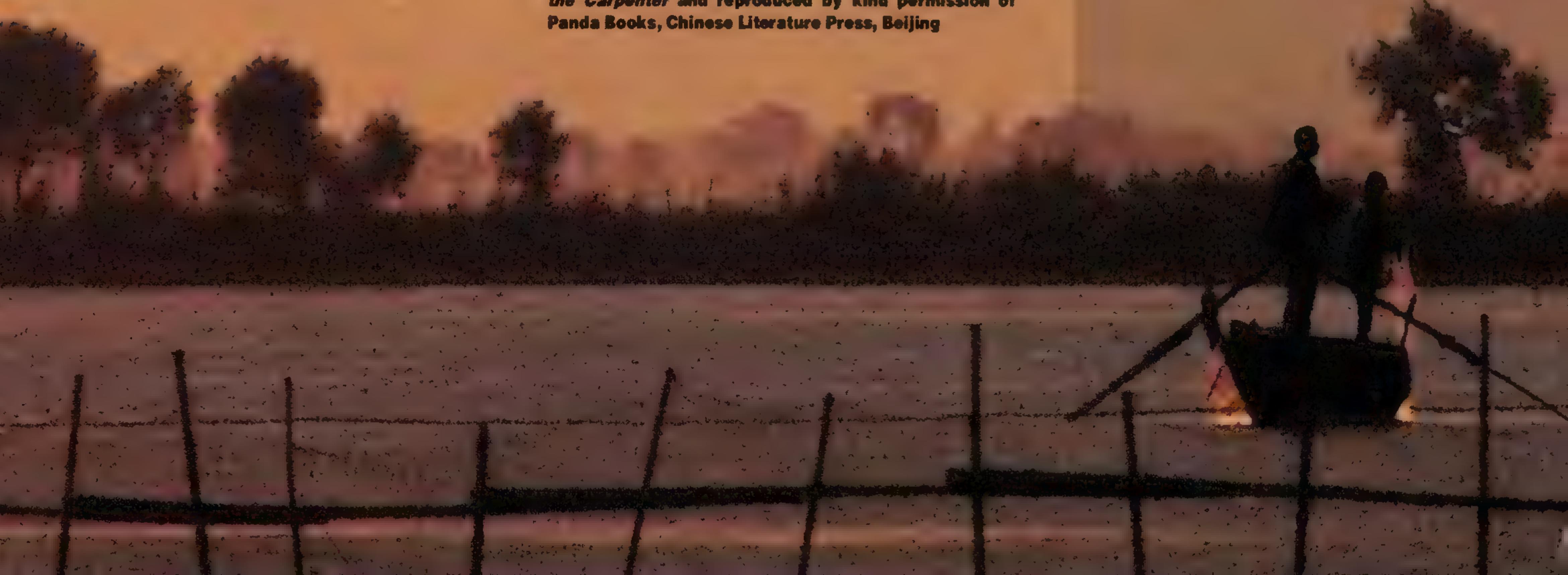
"When a boat sinks I can dive to collect stuff too. I promise you I'm a better swimmer than they are. I can go down deeper than that."

"Let's set up a unit when we go back, or we'll never be able to leave the village again."

"Looking down on us the moment they join the army! In another two years they won't think us worth talking to, but are they all that much better?"

That autumn they learned to fire rifles. When winter came and the time to catch fish in the ice, they took it in turn to take out the sleigh and whizz back and forth over the ice, patrolling the village. When the enemy attempted to "mop up" the marshlands, they worked hand in glove with the army, slipping fearlessly in and out of the sea of reeds.  Translated by Gladys Yang
Photos by Cheng Weidong

Taken from the collection entitled *The Blacksmith and the Carpenter* and reproduced by kind permission of Panda Books, Chinese Literature Press, Beijing



The Many Pools of Lake Baiyangdian

History hovers all around Lake Baiyangdian. Zhaobeikou on the fringes of the lake was the border between Yan and Zhao during the Warring States Period (475 - 221 B.C.). During the Northern Song dynasty (960 - 1127), there was an imperial garrison at the lake to protect it against their contemporary rivals, the Liao dynasty (916 - 1125). Emperor Chengzu of the Ming (reign dates 1403 - 1424) came through here with his armies and built a memorial tower at Laowangdian. On a less martial note, the area also found favour with the Qing emperors; both Kangxi and Qianlong had pleasure palaces constructed here at what are now

the villages of Guolikou, Quantou and Duancun.

Lake Baiyangdian is located in the centre of the rough triangle Beijing-Tianjin-Shijiazhuang. Beijing and Tianjin cooks delight in its aquatic produce, particularly its freshwater turtles and its large green prawns. It is also well-known for reeds and lotus roots.

The area now has more than one thousand beds in hotels and guesthouses of various standards, as well as campsites. There are hundreds of boats of different types to hire, and at least sixty restaurants. With its villages scattered among the reedbeds and the pools, large or small, in between, Baiyangdian presents itself as one vast and very relaxing leisure centre.

Autumn is probably the best time to visit the lake. The closest town and administrative centre is Anxin, forty kilometres east of Baoding in Hebei. The local authorities have recently opened up five beauty spots to tourism.

Yuanyangdian (Mandarin Duck Pool)

The name comes from the resemblance of its two small lakes to a mandarin drake and his mate, which stay faithful through life. There are hotels, restaurants, shops, etc., here, 1.5 kilometres east of the quayside at

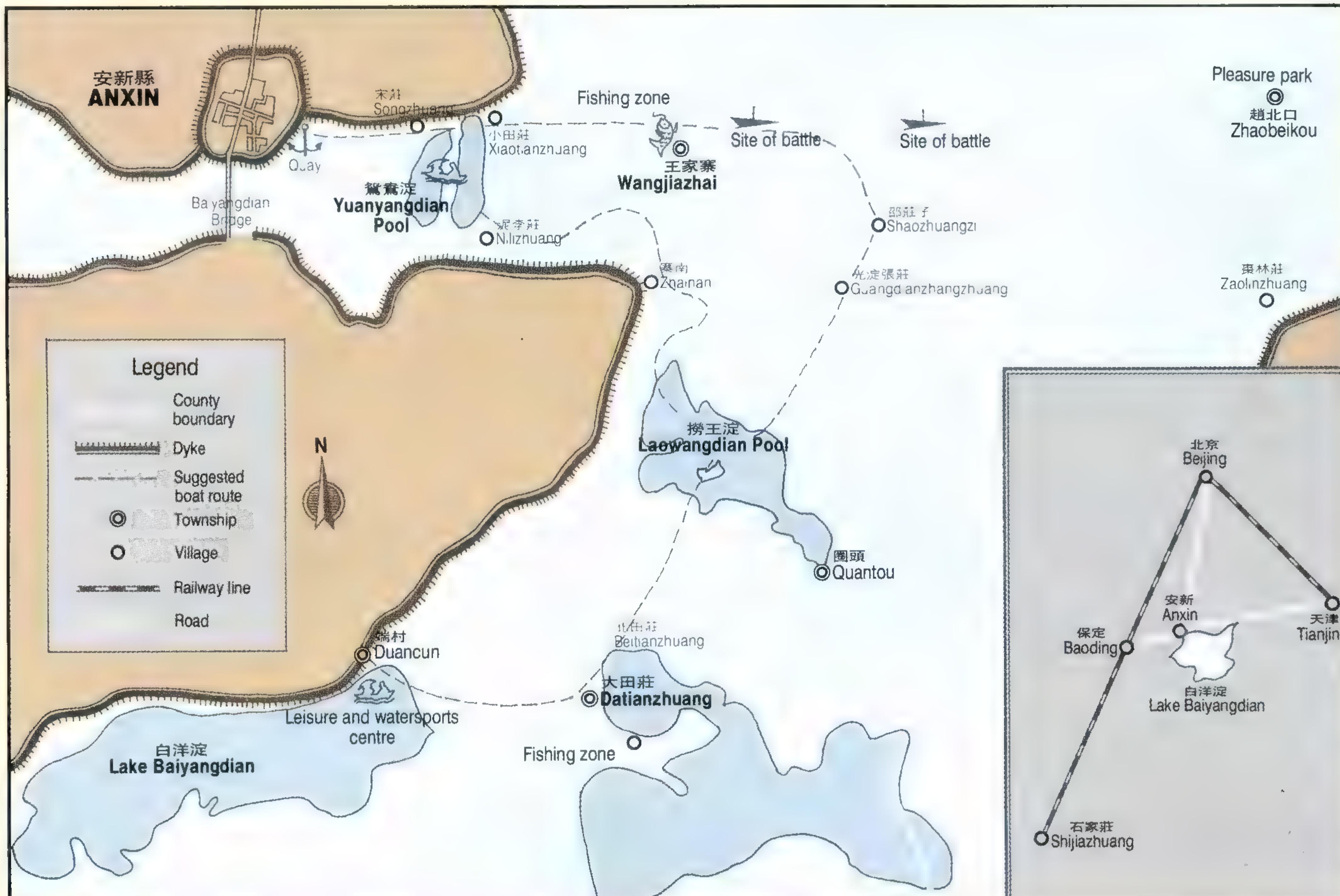
Anxin. The lake also gives good views of Baiyangdian Bridge.

Laowangdian (Scooping Up the Emperor Pool) Situated 8.5 kilometres east of the quayside at Anxin, this lake gets its name from the story that Emperor Qianlong fell into the water during a violent storm and was saved in the nick of time by a local fisherman. At the southern tip of the lake is the site of Qianlong's residence and kitchen at Quantou. Tent accommodation is available.

Baiyangdian (White Ocean Pool) The largest of the 143 lakes and pools here, giving its name to the entire area, this is ten kilometres long from east to west and is a marvellous sight when the lotuses bloom in summer and early autumn. The village of Duancun with Emperor Qianlong's pleasure palace is located beside this lake and offers boating and fishing possibilities.

Wangjiazhai Six kilometres from Anxin's quayside, this hamlet offers around one hundred guestrooms as well as fishing zones. This was the site of a battle during the Sino-Japanese War in the 1940s.

Datianzhuang This village 2.5 kilometres from Duancun's quayside also has hotel accommodation and fishing available. Visitors can go out fishing with local fishermen.



Hebei Specialities

Besides the Cizhou ware introduced in our Special Features, we present other famous products and specialities of Hebei.

The Yishui Inkstone

The Yishui inkstone has a history of more than one thousand years. The source of the inkstone is Taitan, a village 20 kilometres south of Yixian. The Xi family of Yixian in the Southern Tang dynasty (937-975) is said to have made very good ink and inkstones (an inkstone was a traditional requisite in producing ink; a solid stick of ink was rubbed against its flat surface, then water was added into the cavity section to mix the ink to the correct consistency). Xi descendants moved from Yixian to Shezhong (now Shexian in Anhui Province) and continued to earn their living in the same way. Because their products were exquisite and long-lasting, the Xi family was valued by the emperor of the Southern Tang and was granted the surname Li. The ancient inkstone of Yishui still produced in Yixian County is handed down by the Li family.

The stone used for the inkstones is quarried in the Taihang Mountains north of Taitan. It is a kind of light greyish-purple sedimentary rock called Zicui stone. It is naturally patterned with dark green or light yellow and the texture of the stone is very fine, making it ideal for inkstones.

Moreover, the Yishui inkstone is famous for its delicate carving and its simplicity. Each inkstone can be viewed as a piece of art and is as famous as the Duan inkstone of Guangzhou and the She inkstone of Anhui (for more on inkstones, see CHINA TOURISM no. 90).

Quyang's Stone Carvings

The material for the stone carvings of Quyang is white marble taken from Mount Huangshan, south of the county town. The texture of this marble is pure and fine, and its colour does not change with time.

Carvings from Quyang are said to date back to the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). At that time, the craftsmen in the region of Mount Huangshan sculpted fruit, tablets, dragon and phoenix, lions and figures of Guanyin and Buddha from white marble. The earliest stone carvings are found at a pagoda on Goutapo Hill, south of the village of Wangtaibei. Legend has it that an imperial kinsman of the Western Han, Liu Xiu (who later founded the Eastern Han dynasty and proclaimed himself Emperor Guangwu, reign dates 25-57), was pursued by enemies to this mountain. He hid in the

long grass, but his enemies set it on fire. Liu's dog moistened all the grass surrounding him so that he was saved. Later, after his enemies were beaten, Liu made local craftsmen build the pagoda on Goutapo Hill to commemorate his clever dog.

The Quyang carvers' techniques gradually developed during the Tang and Song dynasties. The local craftsmen became the main workforce to decorate the imperial palace at Beijing built by Kublai Khan (reign dates 1260-1294) in the Yuan dynasty.

Their work can still be seen today in Beijing. According to records, Jinshui Bridge in front of the Tian'anmen Gate was designed by Quyang craftsmen. Even the relief sculpture showing the revolutionary struggle at the bottom of the Monument to the People's Heroes on Tian'anmen Square was carved by them. They also participated in the building of some important monuments such as the Great Hall of the People and the Museum of Chinese History.

Health Aids from Baoding

Often in China you see elderly people relaxing in the park, idly turning in their hands two or more metallic balls. These originate in Baoding. Their surface is bright, and they give out a clear, crisp sound when rotated.

These metallic balls have a long history. As early as the Ming dynasty, the craftsmen of Baoding were already producing and selling them. Craftsmanship was highly improved in the Qing dynasty: the originally solid balls became hollow, copper reeds were added, and two kinds were made, one with a high tone, the other low, the two forming a pair. It is said that, when Emperor Guangxu of the Qing dynasty was encoffined, he was holding one of these metallic balls.

From ancient times, the balls have been highly praised by doctors and are considered very effective medical and health aids. They can stimulate the circulation, ease the joints and tendons, strengthen the bones, regulate the nerve centre and prolong life. They are a supplementary instrument to strengthen the body and to prevent common illnesses among the elderly such as hand paralysis, shaking hands, and arthritis.

To use them, take the two balls on the palm of one hand and turn them with the five fingers, making them revolve alternately in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction.

The Cuisine of Baiyangdian

A visit to Lake Baiyangdian provides a good chance to enjoy local seafood and

other aquatic produce, noted for its light and non-greasy flavour and freshness. Here we introduce some famous traditional dishes.

The Carp Banquet: The carp of Baiyangdian is very famous in the north. This banquet includes eight cold dishes, ten hot dishes (dessert inclusive) and a soup, making a total of nineteen dishes. The eight cold dishes consist of one hors d'oeuvres and seven smaller plates, which are mainly different kinds of fish rolls, fish liver, fish slices and fish cakes, served in a hot and peppery or a sweet and sour sauce. The eleven other dishes are also based on fish cooked in various ways and served with other aquatic products. Even the dessert consists of fish rolls deep-fried in syrup, served soaked in ice-cold water, and then scooped up from the water.

Sweet and Sour Carp: Cut open a fresh Baiyangdian carp and deep-fry it in oil until the tail turns upwards and the fish is a golden-yellow colour. Take it out and put it on a dish. Prepare a sweet and sour sauce with green onion, ginger powder, vinegar, sugar and soy sauce and pour it over the fish.

Shelled Shrimps of Longjing: Infuse some Longjing (Dragon Well) tea leaves, which come from Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, in a tea cup or bowl. Then turn the cup (together with the tea inside) upside down on the middle part of a plate. Shell the shrimps, wash them, and add some egg white, cornstarch, soy sauce, salt and wine. Deep-fry the shrimps until they turn red, and put them on the plate, placing them around the tea cup. Gently shake the tea cup before serving to let tea ooze out and mix with the shrimps.

Fried Crab: Gently poach a perfectly round Baiyangdian freshwater crab in water, and shell it. Cook the crab fat and crab meat with paste of egg white in warm oil. Add bamboo shoots, black mushrooms, green onions, ginger and garlic, and the dish is ready for serving.

Steamed Soft-Shelled Turtle: Another traditional dish of Baiyangdian. The head of a fresh turtle is removed and its blood drained. It is boiled at around 80°C to remove any incrustations, then the shell is prised open to clean the inside. The turtle is stuffed with a pork mixture, then placed in stock with the addition of green onion, ginger, garlic, pepper, wine, salt and sliced pork. It is then steamed for about two hours before serving.

Translated by Annette Lee

Hebei's Yesanpo

Yesanpo is reached by train from Yongdingmen railway station in southern Beijing. Take a train on the Beijing-Taiyuan (Shanxi) line and alight either at Shangzhuang/Yesanpo, the location of the holiday village, or at Gougezhuang.

Regular bus services provide transport be-

tween strategic points in the Yesanpo area:

1. Baili Gorge – Holiday Village (19 km)
2. Baili Gorge – Longmen Gorge (28 km)
3. Baili Gorge – Yugu Caves (15 km)
4. Holiday Village – Yugu Caves (14 km)
5. Holiday Village – Longmen Gorge (22 km)

Yesanpo Scenic Areas



Touring Central and Southern Hebei

We would like to map out a rough itinerary for those wishing to base a visit to Hebei on this month's articles.

The central and southern parts of Hebei are relatively easy to reach from Beijing. A good way to start would be to take the Beijing-Taiyuan railway line west to Yesanpo/Shangzhuang or Gougezhuang for a look at the natural beauties of Yesanpo, only a three-hour journey.

Continuing in a westerly direction would bring you to Laiyuan, a popular summer resort. East of the town rises one of the major peaks in the Taihang Range – Mount Baishi (White Rock) – at 2,000 metres above sea-level. Since there is a motorable road right to the top, this is a favourite excursion.

From Laiyuan, take a long-distance bus east to Yixian, site of one of the capitals of the State of Yan 2,000 years ago. Four kilometres west of Yixian are the Western Qing Mausoleums, covering an area of some 800 square kilometres and including the tombs of four Qing emperors – Yongzheng, Jiaqing, Daoguang and Guangxu. The famous Yishui inkstones (named after the river which flows through Yixian) can be purchased here at favourable prices.

It's long-distance bus again to Baoding due south. Once the capital of Hebei, this was the renowned 'southern gateway' to Beijing. The most interesting place here is the Lianhua (Lotus Flower) Pond in a garden complex built more than 750 years ago. Anxin, east of Baoding, is the jumping-off point for boat trips around reed-studded Lake Baiyangdian.

Since Baoding is on a railway line, it is easiest to continue south by train. At Dingxian, visit the pagoda at Kaiyuan Monastery, built in 1055 during the Song dynasty. At 84 metres high, it is China's tallest brick pagoda.

If you have the time, you could also make a side-trip to Quyang, twenty kilometres to the northwest. Its Beiyue Temple dates from the Northern and Southern Dynasties. The murals inside are magnificent but, unfortunately, photography is strictly prohibited. There are also many stone carvings and stele inscriptions here dating from the Northern Qi, Tang and Qing dynasties. Quyang is renowned for its stone carving and to the south, in the village of



Yangping, you can see marble quarries everywhere. Their products are exported overseas.

Not far east of Dingxian lies Anguo, site of the largest medicinal ingredients market in northern China. Apart from the market, the Yaowang (Medicine King) Temple and the memorial of Guan Hanqing, a famous playwright of the Yuan dynasty, are well worth visiting.

On the way to the provincial capital, Shijiazhuang, stop off at Zhengding. There are no transport problems here since Zhengding is a major tourist attraction, the bronze Avalokitesvara of Longxing Monastery being

accounted one of the 'Four Treasures of Hebei'.

Shijiazhuang itself does not merit much time, but you could make a side-trip to the southeast to Zhaoxian and its ancient stone bridges. Zhaoxian is also noted for its pears, which can weigh around half a kilo each and are very juicy.

From Shijiazhuang, take the train right down to the south of the province and the ancient city of Handan, one-time capital of Zhao. Fifty kilometres to the southwest lie the Xiangtangshan Grottoes and the Cizhou kiln at Pengcheng.

Ninety-two kilometres west of Handan is

Shexian, and ten kilometres north of Shexian is the Wahuang Temple dedicated to Nüwa, goddess of fertility who, with her brother Fuxi, is considered one of the ancestors of humankind. The most interesting (if crowded) time for a visit here would be on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month (generally falling in October), when a pilgrimage to the temple draws devotees from Hebei, Henan and Shanxi.

From Handan, you could take a train straight back to Beijing or continue south to Zhengzhou in Henan for Luoyang and the other important sites of antiquity along the Huanghe (Yellow River).

**Train Schedules
Beijing - Baoding - Shijiazhuang - Handan - Zhengzhou**

279 F.T.	251 F.T.	245 F.T.	241/249 F.T.	231 F.T.	189 F.T.	163 F.T.	149 F.T.	145/148 F.T.	121 F.T.	Train No. Station	122 F.T.	146/147 F.T.	150 F.T.	164 F.T.	190 F.T.	232 F.T.	242/250 F.T.	246 F.T.	252 F.T.	280 F.T.
19:26	23:59	11:30	00:44	05:54	17:06	08:26	20:00	09:22	21:26	Beijing	05:00	04:30	15:50	23:06	08:50	03:40	21:22	04:00	06:44	16:44
21:45	02:20	14:04	02:57	08:07	19:26	10:28	22:12	11:41	23:42	Baoding	02:59	02:19	13:38	20:58	06:38	01:33	19:16	01:59	03:53	14:31
22:31	03:06	14:54	03:46	08:53	20:13	—	22:58	12:26	00:27	Dingzhou	02:07	01:25	12:45	19:54	05:45	00:38	18:23	01:04	02:53	13:38
23:41	04:15	16:05	05:04	10:03	21:23	12:11	00:07	13:33	01:35	Shijiazhuang	01:12	00:31	11:52	19:01	04:52	23:32	17:30	00:09	01:58	12:44
01:00	05:42	17:29	06:39	11:29	22:51	13:32	01:34	14:59	03:00	Xingtai	23:33	22:52	10:13	17:22	03:11	22:05	15:22	22:30	00:17	11:05
02:00	06:30	18:34	07:39	12:15	23:54	14:26	02:19	15:43	03:57	Handan	22:47	22:06	09:27	16:36	02:23	21:10	14:41	21:37	23:31	10:12
02:57	07:35	19:32	08:36	13:20	00:52	15:24	03:23	16:39	04:49	Anyang	21:56	21:14	08:36	15:45	01:32	20:17	13:40	20:38	22:32	09:14
04:25	09:29	21:12	10:07	14:36	02:26	17:08	05:04	18:07	06:17	Xinxiang	20:26	19:44	06:59	14:15	23:55	18:34	11:14	19:01	20:49	07:39
05:41	10:30	22:25	11:22	To Luoyang	To Chongqing	To Chengdu	To Guiyang	To Nanchang	To Lanzhou and Xining	Zhengzhou	19:01	18:34	05:48	13:05			10:00	17:51	19:38	06:25
To Xian		To Wuchang	To Xiangfan and Yichang								From Lanzhou and Xining	From Nanchang	From Guiyang	From Chengdu	From Chongqing	From Luoyang	From Xiangfan and Yichang	From Wuchang		From Xian

F.T. - Fast through passenger train

Main Shopping Stores In Shijiazhuang

Name	Address	Telephone
Shijiazhuang Friendship Store	Yuhua Road	49315
Hebei Arts and Crafts Bazaar	71 Jiefang Road	632003
Hebei Hotel Bazaar	South Building, 23 Yucai Street	615815
International Building Bazaar	23 Chang'an Road West	48277
Hebei Cultural and Historical Relics Shop	Yucai Street	614487
Hebei Tourism Service Shop	23 Yuhua Road Central	43452
Hebei Tourist Products Bazaar	20 Jiefang Road	632610
Hebei Qiaohui Shop	Yuhua Road Central	49643

Guesthouses and Hotels in Central and Southern Hebei

City	Name	Adresse	Telephone
Shijiazhuang	Hebei Hotel	23 Yucai Street	615961
	International Building	23 Chang'an Road West	48961
	Shijiazhuang Hotel	48 Qingshan Street	612901
	Jiuzhou Hotel	10 Shigang Avenue	741078
Baoding	Baoding Hotel	Xinhua Road North	24126
	Baoding Old City Hotel	65 Chenghuangmiao Street	26922
Handan	Handan Hotel	74 Zhonghua Avenue	25911
	Honglou Hotel	87 Renmin Road	23304
Cangzhou	Cangzhou Hotel	54 Xihuang Road Central	24522
	Foreigners Guesthouse	3 Yingbin Road	23895

**Train Schedules
Beijing South - Yuangping - Taiyuan**

597 O.	595 O.	Train No. Station	596 O.	598 O.
17:40	06:07	Beijing South	21:00	13:05
17:56	06:23	Fengtai	20:47	12:52
19:07	07:39	Lianggezhuang	19:38	11:35
20:03	08:42	Shidu	18:41	10:41
20:12	08:52	Pingyu	18:32	10:31
20:30	09:07	*Shangzhuang	18:20	10:19
20:43	09:21	*Gougezhuang	18:08	10:06
21:11	09:50	Baijian	17:46	09:44
23:30	12:03	Laiyuan	15:46	07:33
01:19	14:08	Lingqiu	14:15	05:40
16:55		Daixian	11:17	
17:56		Yuanping	10:23	
18:47		Xinzhou	09:30	
21:00		Taiyuan	07:16	

O. - Ordinary passenger train

* Passengers visiting Yesanpo can get off at Shangzhuang or Gougezhuang

Hebei: Past Coverage in CHINA TOURISM

No. 31 Hebei Special (Four Greats Along the Great Wall; A Summary of Chinese History; Four Reasons Why Hebei Is Incomparable; Touring Guide to Qinhuangdao and Beidaihe)

No. 65 Chengde Special (Commoners in the Imperial Garden Resort; 'Mulan Qixian'; The Eight Outer Temples)

No. 93 Anguo Medicine Fair

No. 100 A Feast of Acrobatic Skills (Wuqiao); Great Wall, Here We Come!

No. 101 The Grand Canal: Glimpses of Land and People; Stories Behind the Relics; Historic Traces of Islam

No. 120 Longxing Monastery and Its Bronze Bodhisattva

'Children of the Gods'

Hong Kong Museum of History in Kowloon Park is staging a fascinating exhibition of Chinese children's dress until October 21 1990. The style, colour and decorative motifs used for traditional children's costumes reveal the connection between dress and symbolism in China. Exhibits, drawn mainly from southern China and Hong Kong's New Territories, include sections on footwear, baby carriers, hats for babies and children, accessories such as ear muffs and collars, and toys. An exhibition catalogue is available at HK\$45.

1990 International Wushu Tournament

The Chinese Wushu Association has announced that Beijing will be the venue for the 1990 International Wushu Free Sparring Invitation Tournament from November 21-25. Invitations have already been extended to participants from Singapore, Japan, Taiwan and twenty-two other countries and regions. The tournament will feature nine categories of competitions in weight classes from 48 kilos to 85 kilos. *Wushu*, a form of Chinese martial arts, will appear for the very first time as a discipline at the 11th Asian Games this September, and a World Wushu Federation is to be set up in Beijing in October, reflecting its growing popularity worldwide.

Source of Yangtse Shrinking

The glaciers on Mount Geladandong (6,621 metres) on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau which form the source of the River Yangtse are melting and shrinking — that was the recent finding by a Chinese scientific expedition. And global warming is to blame, according to one expedition member, an expert glaciologist. Six glaciers were explored and their current dimensions compared with aerial photographs taken and topographical maps drawn in the early 1970s. The ten-kilometre-long Gangjiauba Glacier, which originates on the main peak of Geladandong, has shrunk by over 150 metres. Meteorological records show that rainfall and temperatures in the area have increased in recent years.

Artificial Synthesis of Organic Germanium

In the 1950s, Chinese experts found rich concentrations of organic germanium in traditional Chinese medicines such as ginseng, glossy ganoderma and the wolfberry, and have studied it intensively since then. They have now succeeded in artificial synthesis and application of organic germanium, which has been approved by the Chinese Ministry of Public Health for clinical trials concerning its alleged anti-cancer effect.

New Autonomous Counties

The Beizhen Manchu Autonomous County has now been officially established in Liaoning Province in China's northeast, the area which was the homeland of the Manchu people and still has the largest concentration of this nationality. Beizhen's 303,000 Manchus represent 58.2 percent of its population.

Hebei Province also has two new administrative units: the Kuancheng Manchu Autonomous County, home to 118,000 Manchus (again more than half the population), and the Weicheng Manchu and Mongolian Autonomous County, with 244,000 inhabitants from these two ethnic groups. The latter area was an imperial hunting ground during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), which was founded by the Manchus.

National Clean City

Weihai, a coastal city at the tip of the Shandong Peninsula, is the first place in China to be honoured as a 'national clean city'. The title was awarded at a national conference on the 'clean city campaign' chaired by the Cultural Patriotic Public Health Campaign Committee and held in the city this June.

After more than a decade's effort, industrial enterprises have been moved from non-industrial areas, noise pollution measures have been implemented, waste disposal facilities have been modernized, and Weihai's residents have been thoroughly educated in the importance of hygiene and public health. More than 100,000 pots of flowers beautify the streets, 126 bronze and stone sculptures have been set up in public places, and 32.5 percent of the total urban area consists of green spaces.

Yantai and Qingdao in Shandong, Ningbo in Zhejiang, Dalian in Liaoning and Qinhuangdao in Hebei — all port cities — have also been certified as complying with state standards of cleanliness.

Hotel Update

As Beijing makes final preparations for the 11th Asian Games to be held this September, new hotel openings continue apace. Among them is a three-star tourist hotel, the **Longdu**. Jointly managed by the China New Building Materials Corp. and the General Corp. of Foreign Trade Transportation, it is located to the west of the capital close to the People's University and the Summer Palace.

Another is the **Xin Dadu Hotel** on Chengongzhuang Road, again in western Beijing. With 400 well-equipped guest-rooms, the hotel boasts more than ten restaurants and banqueting halls serving Chinese and Western cuisine. It has a business centre and numerous recreational facilities including bowling alley, billiard room, swimming pool and karaoke disco.

Yet another, the 52-storey 492-room **Jing Guang New World Hotel**, is located minutes from the financial district and diplomatic quarter. This state-of-the-art business hotel is managed by New World Hotels International.

One more new arrival in Beijing is the 408-room luxury **Tianlun Dynasty Hotel**, located in the main commercial district near the Palace Museum. This is a sister to the Huiquan Dynasty Hotel in Shandong's Qingdao. The hotel's soft-opening is scheduled for August 1990.

A final word on Beijing! The 743-room **China World Hotel** — the focal point of the capital's new China World Trade Centre — opened its doors for business on July 12. This prestigious hotel is managed by Shangri-La International.

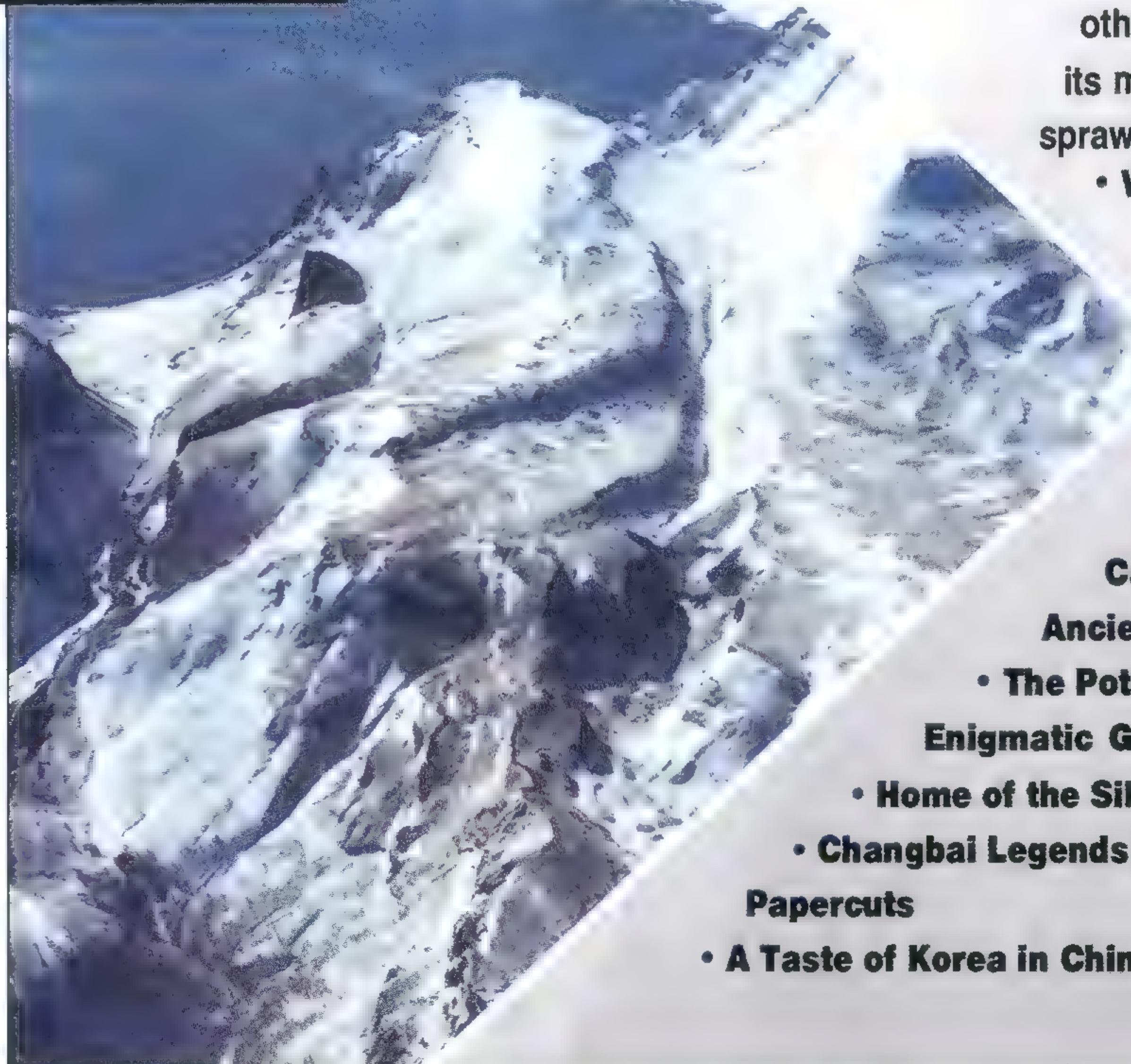
In Shanghai, the **Yangtse New World Hotel**'s soft-opening took place in June. This 36-storey luxury hotel with over 500 rooms, sister to the Jing Guang New World Hotel, is located midway between the airport and the city centre in the Hongqiao Economic and Technological Development Area.

Elsewhere in China, the **Hyatt Xian** in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province, opened in July. A 30% discount is available until December 31 1990 (excluding suites). The 404-room hotel is located on the city's main thoroughfare within the ancient walls.

Jingdezhen Porcelain Festival

The famous porcelain city of Jingdezhen in the northeast of Jiangxi Province is to host an International Porcelain Festival this October. Trade talks, academic seminars, as well as an exhibition of current production and rare porcelain made in Jingdezhen and elsewhere, will be on the programme.

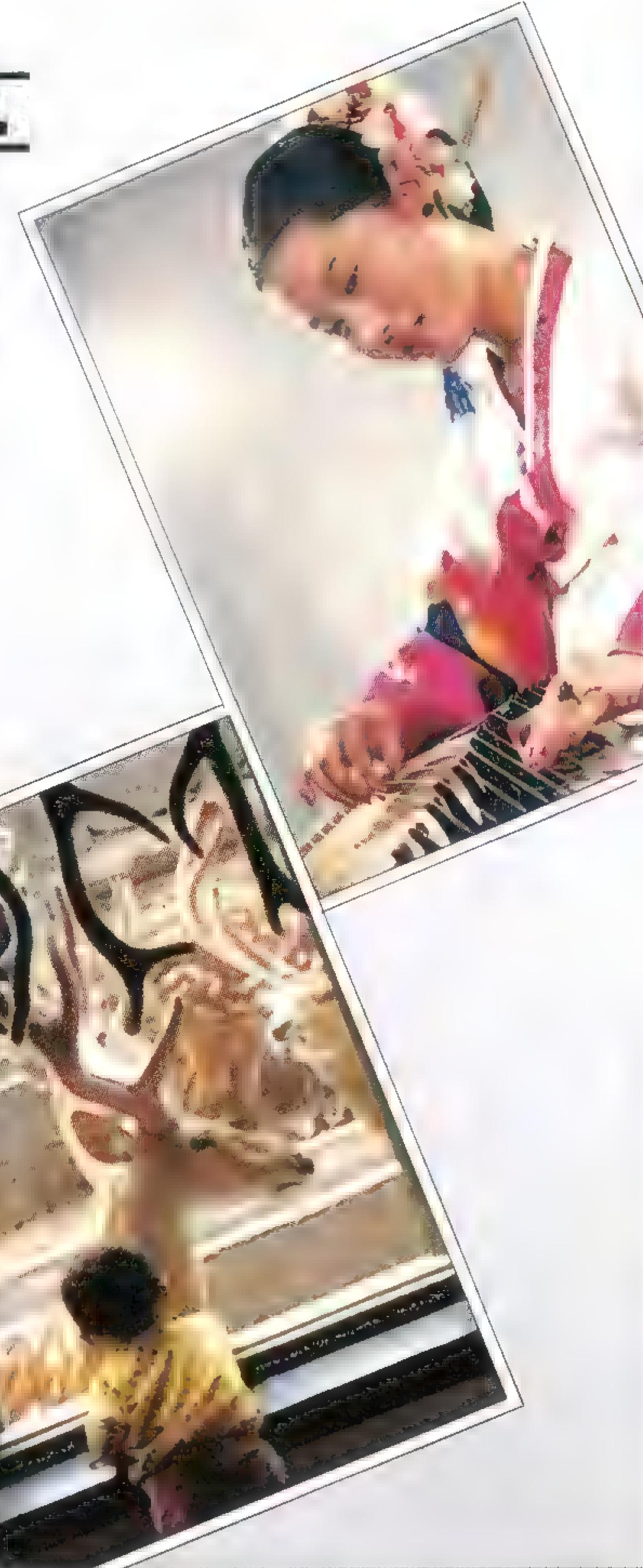
NEXT
ISSUE



JILIN SPECIAL

Long a 'forbidden zone' and still remote, Jilin — home to Koreans and Manchus, among others — is characterized by its magnificent forests and sprawling mountains:

- **Wreathed in Mystery:**
- **The Changbai Mountains**
- **Among the Koreans of Yanbian**
- **Ji'an — Capital of Ancient Koguryo**
- **The Potent, Enigmatic Ginseng**
- **Home of the Sika Deer**
- **Changbai Legends in Papercuts**
- **A Taste of Korea in China**



Nanjing Underground Project

Preparations are underway to construct an underground railway (subway) system in Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province. The first phase, scheduled for completion in the year 2000, will involve 17.4 kilometres of track running north and south under the city centre. The system will eventually have fourteen stations and a capacity of 480,000 passengers a day.

Beijing's New Moslem Complex

The capital's estimated 200,000 Moslems now have a building of their own on Wangfujing Street where they can shop, entertain guests and conduct business. Opened this July, the seven-storey building in a modern interpretation of the classic Arabic style is expected to become a symbol for the Moslem community. The first three floors contain stores stocking traditional Moslem foods as well as jewellery and arts and crafts. The fourth floor has a Moslem restaurant and a banqueting hall, aimed primarily at visiting Arab businessmen, while the top three floors are equipped with the latest business facilities.

Air Travel News

A new air route has been launched via Beijing between Hefei, capital of Anhui Province, and Ürümqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. There is one return flight every week, taking around five hours in each direction.

This June, Finnair and Scandinavia Air Service (SAS) merged their Beijing offices in an attempt to survive the fierce competition on the direct Beijing-Europe route. Finnair pioneered non-stop flying from northern Europe to Beijing in June 1988 with a flight taking only seven hours and fifty minutes. The merged offices intend to strengthen their foothold on Chinese routes and to lower costs to increase passenger numbers.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) has also announced a new service for passengers. From July 1 1990, Chinese and foreign passengers may book interline and return tickets at sixteen CAAC domestic booking offices (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Dalian, Guangzhou, Xiamen, Nanjing, Wuhan, Guilin, Xi'an, Chengdu, Shenyang, Harbin, Changchun, Haikou and Shantou) as well as thirty booking offices abroad.

Eastern Han Tomb Find

A tomb believed to date back more than 1,700 years to the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220) has been discovered east of Suizhou in northern Hubei Province. The brick and stone tomb overlooks the River Yunshui not far from the site of the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng of the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), which yielded more than 7,000 marvellous relics (see Chinese Potpourri in CHINA TOURISM nos. 90-94). This latest find, thirty-eight square metres in area, is thought to be the tomb of a rich local landowner.

Heshan-Hong Kong Passenger Service

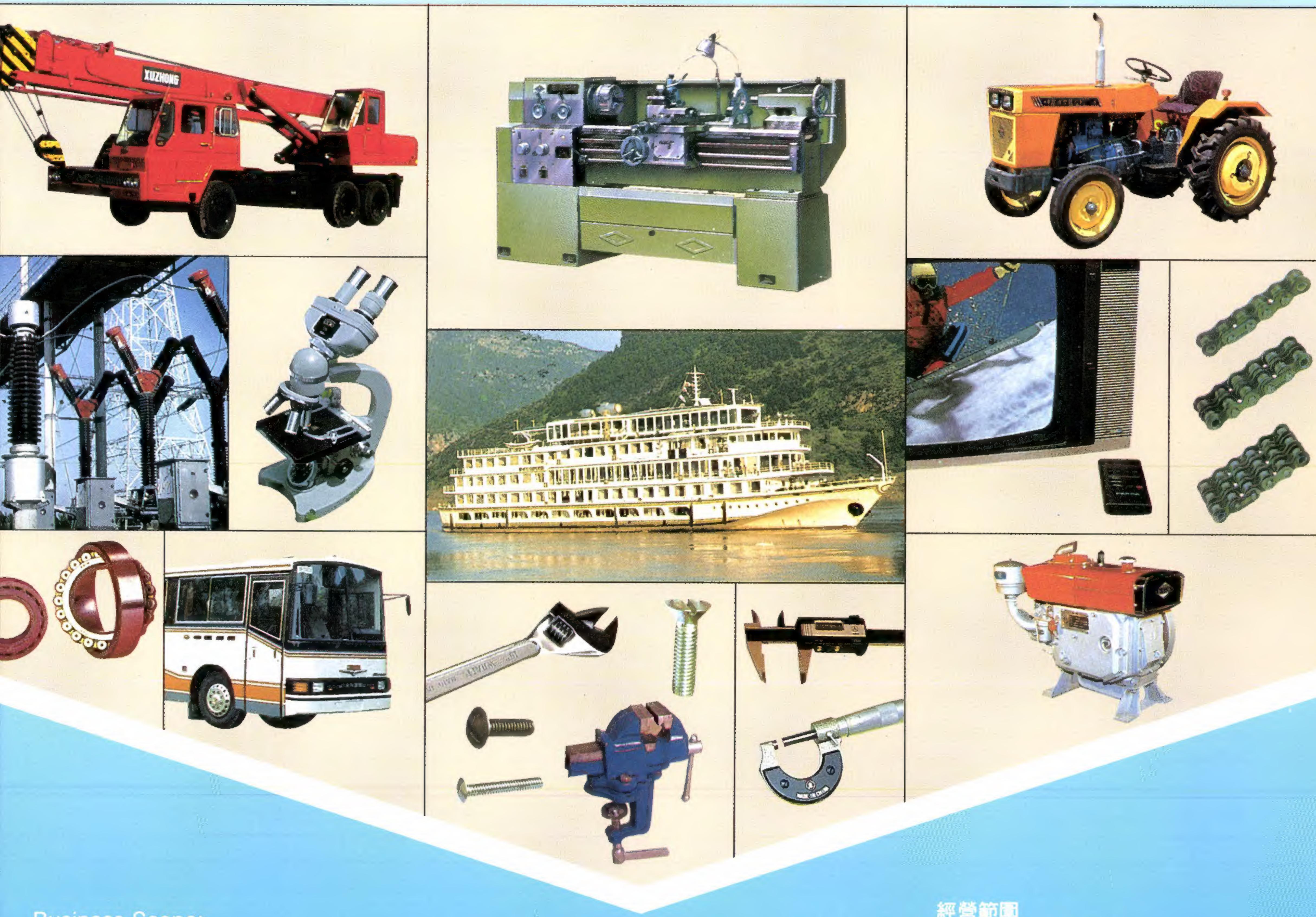
The riverine port of Heshan in Jiangmen County, Guangdong Province, is now linked to Hong Kong by passenger ferry. During a trial operation period from January to May this year, the port handled 45,000 passengers to and from the mainland. Heshan is one of the thirty-six 'open' ports approved in Guangdong, thirty-two of which are already operational.

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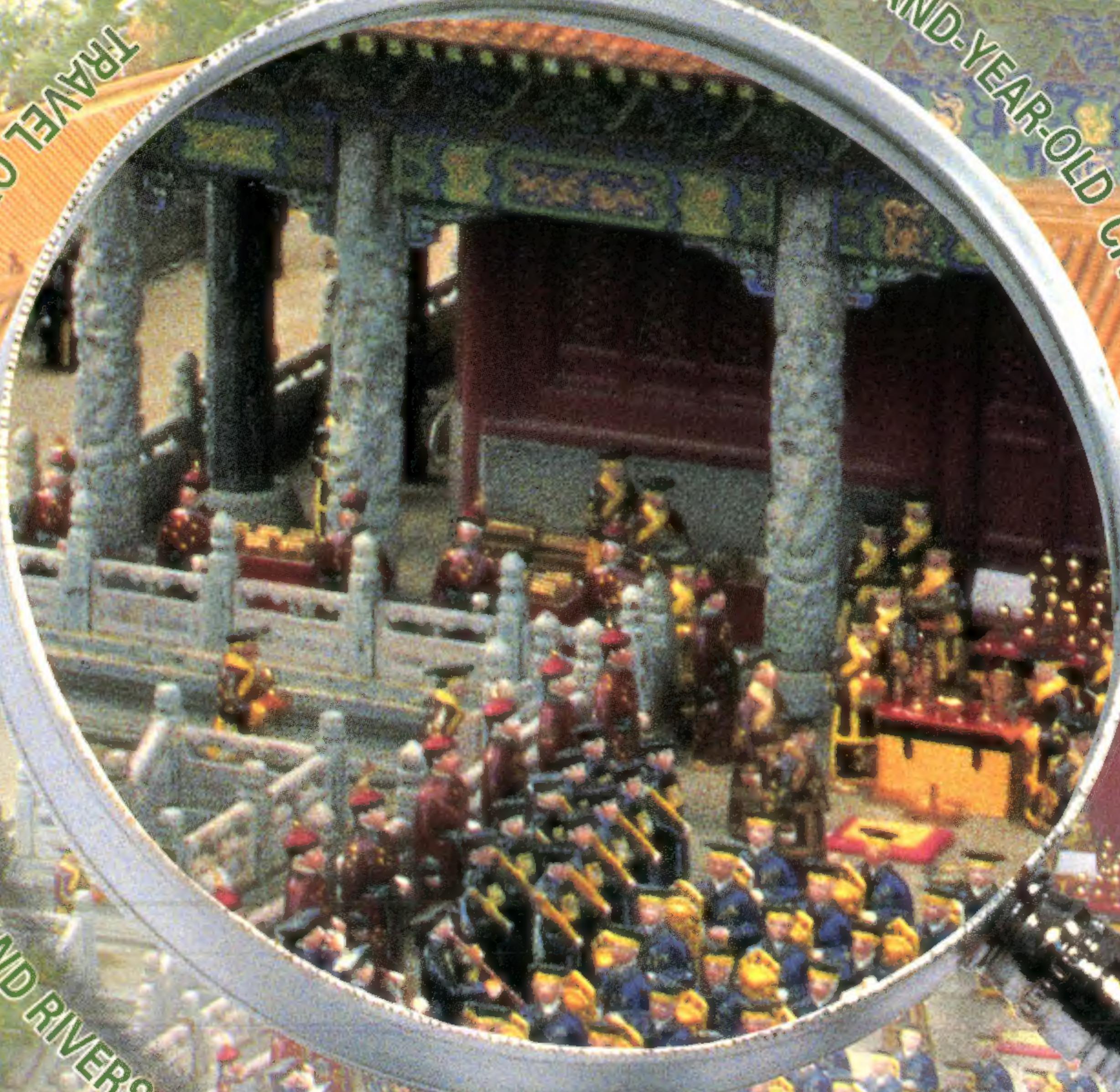
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